

BV 4915 .M222 1865
McCord, William J.
Our passover

OUR PASSOVER,

OR

THE GREAT THINGS OF THE LAW.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM J. McCORD,

WASSAIC, N. Y.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
No. 821 CHESTNUT STREET.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by

THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District
of Pennsylvania.

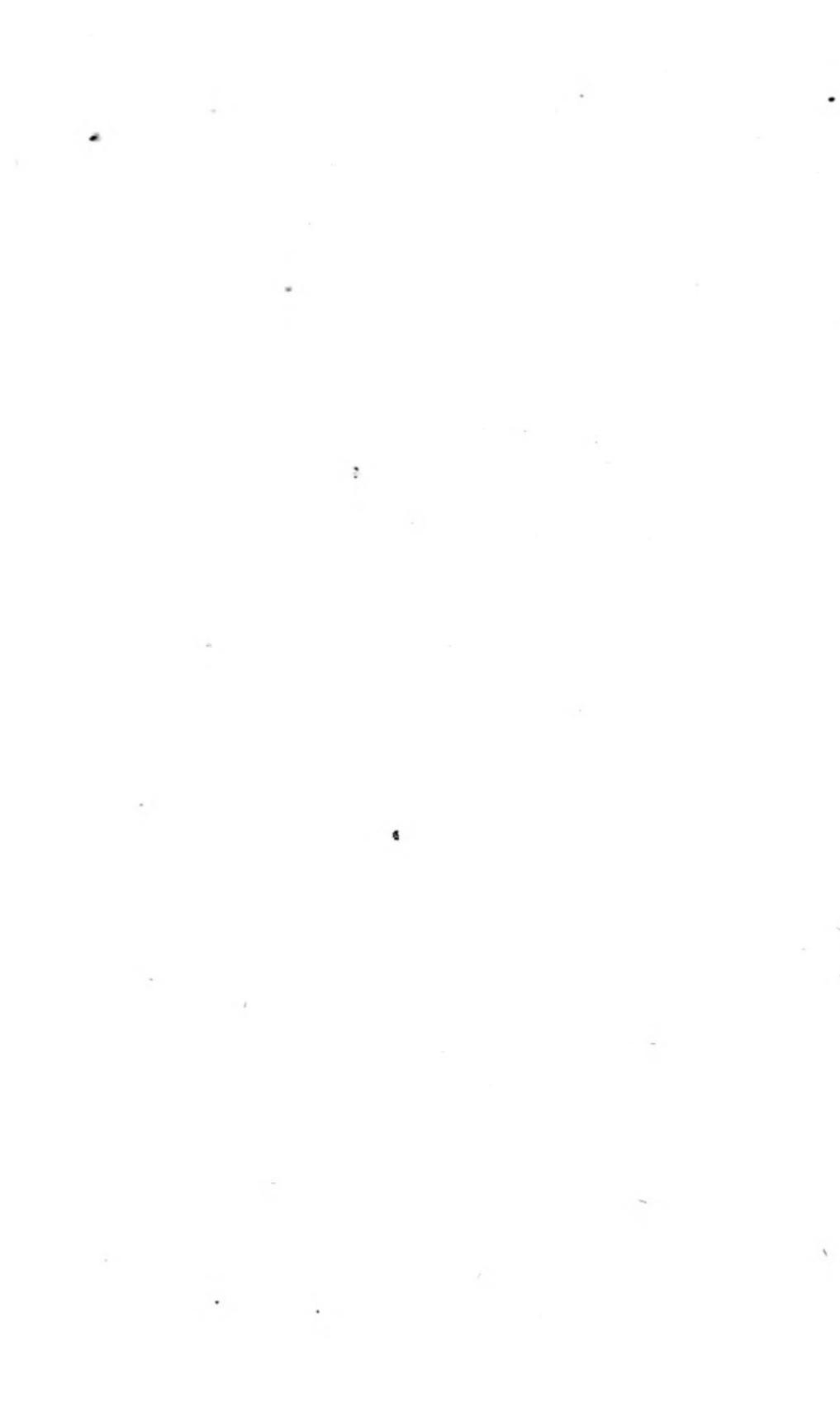
STEREOTYPED BY WESTCOTT & THOMSON.

P R E F A C E.

ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable. It is wise to gather instruction from the Old Testament as well as the New. These things were written for our instruction and admonition. In this volume information is drawn from various sources ; and so it is proper to make this general acknowledgement of indebtedness to others. The plan and the execution are my own, and for these I alone am responsible, while free use is made of the thoughts and the language of others, in the hope that thus gathered and presented, the work may be profitable and useful. May the instruction here given be blessed to all who read !

W. J. M.

WASSAIC, N. Y., *Feb. 22, 1865.*



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.....	7
The passover—Leaven—The sacrifice of Christ—The lamb chosen—The lamb without blemish—The lamb slain—Blood upon the door-posts—The flesh wasted—The flesh eaten—Wholly eaten or burned—All eat at the same time—Eaten in haste—All concerned—Not a bone broken—The feast to be kept—A life-long festival—The Lord's supper—How to keep the feast—What is needed—Old leaven—Leaven of malice and wickedness—Unleavened bread—Useful lessons—Hymn	7-41
II. THE GREAT THINGS OF THE LAW.....	42
Great things accounted strange—Great things of the law—The moral law—The rule and the reason—Redemption necessary—Christ died—Why any perish—Why any are saved—God's pleasure—The law preached—The ceremonial law—Sacred persons—Sacred places—Sacred things—Sacrifices—Types and shadows—Great things significant—Written to us—Hymns.....	42-70
III. FORGIVENESS WITH GOD.....	71
Explanation—Who can stand—What is here taught—The first lesson—What the Scriptures teach—What men confess—	5

Reason—The second lesson—The Bible—Confessions—The third lesson—Forgiveness with God—The way of forgiveness—What Christ has done—How God forgives—Invitations and entreaties—The fourth lesson—God revealed—Reverential fear—Filial fear—Fear of wrath—Fear a motive—Fear of delay—Fear and obedience—Fear our whole duty—Adoration—Fear and tremble—Universalism—Seek forgiveness—Hymns.....	71-101
IV. WHY HALT YE?.....	102
The question—Indecision unreasonable—Decision not difficult—Sufficient evidence—Sufficient inducements—God requires us to decide—Never easier to decide—Loss of time—Sacrifice of enjoyment—Sacrifice of usefulness—The interests at stake—It occasions delay—Abuse of privileges—Health may fail—Life may end—The Spirit may depart—Hardening influence—Ruinous influence—The consequences—Unreasonable and dangerous—Decision wise and important—How long.....	102-120

OUR PASSOVER.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

For even Christ our passover is saerificed for us.—1 Cor. v. 7.

The Passover.

ABRAHAM was called of God to leave the land of his fathers and go into a strange country. He obeyed the call, and went out, not knowing whither he went.—Heb. xi. 8. God brought him into the land of Canaan, promised that land to him and to his children, and declared that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed.—Gen. xxii. 18.

These promises looked far into the future. There must be patient waiting for their fulfilment. To Abraham it was foretold that his children should dwell in a strange land, and be oppressed and afflicted four hundred years; that then God would appear in their behalf, judge the nation that afflicted them, set them at liberty, and bring them into the land of promise.—Gen. xv. 13-16. Acts vii. 6, 7.

For long years they groaned under Egyptian bondage, and their cry reached unto heaven. As the time of their deliverance drew near, Moses was

raised up, plagues were inflicted upon the Egyptians, and thus were they made willing to let Israel go. The last and greatest plague was the death of all the first-born of the Egyptians, so there was not a house where there was not one dead, and doubtless in many houses more than one. Sad and dreadful night ! It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing Israel out from the land of Egypt : this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.—Ex. xii. 29, 30, 42.

In anticipation of that night and in preparation for it, the Israelites were directed to kill a lamb for each family and put the blood upon the door-posts ; and the destroying angel, as he passed through the land, should pass over the houses where the blood was found. The feast thus instituted, and annually thereafter to be observed in commemoration of this event, was called the passover. The lamb slain on this occasion was a type of our blessed Saviour, who is hence called the Lamb of God—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world ; and hence, too, Paul writes to the Corinthians, Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even *Christ our Passover is saerified* for us : therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—1 Cor. v. 6-8.

Leaven.

Leaven is diffusive. It spreads. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. So a little sin corrupts the whole mass. “It is the nature of evil to diffuse itself. This is true with regard to individuals and communities. A single sin, however secret, when indulged, diffuses its corrupting influence over the whole soul.” “As the Jews therefore used to search with candles in every corner of their houses, that they might cast out all the leaven, before they made the unleavened bread for the passover;” so we ought to purge every impurity from our hearts; and so churches should cast out every scandalous and disorderly member. Purge out the old leaven, be a new lump, unleavened. “A Christian is a new or holy man.”

The allusion is to the Jewish passover and the customs connected with it. As they purified their houses, casting out all the leaven and whatever was leavened, so we should purify our hearts and lives, and our churches. Thus the Corinthians were to purify themselves, and to purify their churches by casting out or putting away from among themselves that wicked person.—1 Cor. v. 13. “Lewdness is the old leaven to be purged out; because the Corinthians were infamous for it to a proverb.” All sin is leaven; and all sin is to be put away. As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.—1 Peter i. 15, 16.

The Sacrifice of Christ.

The motive for compliance, and the reason, is the sacrifice of Christ for our sins : for even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. As he died for sin, we should die to sin. Hoping in him, we should purify ourselves as he is pure. Christ is called our passover. The passover sacrifice was a type of Christ's atonement. In allusion to the paschal lamb, Christ is called the Lamb slain—the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. He is our passover or paschal lamb. He has been slain or sacrificed for us ; and now we must keep the feast of a perpetual passover in his service. We must not live in sin, but be holy and live to him. We must not only, in every suitable way, commemorate his sufferings and death, but we must show them forth in our lives. “As Christ died to redeem us from all iniquity, it is not only contrary to the design of his death, but a proof that we are not interested in its benefits, if we live in sin. * * * * As a feast lasting seven days was connected with the slaying of the paschal lamb, so a life of consecration to God should be connected with the death of our passover—Christ.” Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—1 Cor. v. 8.

In illustrating the sacrificial offering or atonement of Christ, let us take a hasty view of the divinely

instituted ceremonies of the Jewish passover, availing ourselves of what others have said and written, so far as it may serve our purpose. This will enable us to comprehend the force and beauty of the words, For even Christ our passover (or paschal lamb) is sacrificed (or slain) for us, or in our stead. The passover was instituted on the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. It was to be observed as a yearly festival. The law in regard to it is found in the twelfth chapter of Exodus, and to that we will look. Turn, then, to Ex. xii. 1-39, and notice the following particulars:—

The Lamb Chosen.

The lamb must be chosen beforehand. Though not to be killed until the 14th day of the month, it must be selected on the 10th. This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. In the 10th day of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for a house. And ye shall keep it up until the 14th day of the same month. Ex. xii. 2-6. Thus the lamb was chosen and ready. So Jesus Christ was fore-appointed by the Father for the work which he was to accomplish for us. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. Isa. xlii. 1. Hence he was promised and foretold; and hence he said, I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. John vi. 38. When the

fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.—Gal. iv. 4, 5. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and by wicked hands crucified and slain.—Acts ii. 23. He said, The Son of man goeth as it is written of him.—Matt. xxvi. 24. There was no uncertainty about the plan which Jesus Christ undertook to execute ; none about its results. As the victim was fore-appointed, so were the benefits to result from his sacrificial death. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.—Eph. i. 3-12. He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love : having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. As Christ is the chosen victim, so his people are the chosen seed—chosen to be holy and without blame.—Eph. i. 4-6.

The Lamb without Blemish.

This was the law. Your lamb shall be without blemish.—Ex. xii. 5. This was “to signify that though our sins were imputed to Christ, yet he was in himself holy, harmless, undefiled, and therefore called a lamb without blemish and without spot.—

Heb. vii. 26 : 1 Pet. i. 19. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He was free from original and from actual sin, perfectly pure and holy. Having no sin of his own, he was prepared to render an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of men. No fault could be justly alleged against him; nothing worthy of death could be found in him. He was a lamb as to innocence and harmlessness, a lamb selected, appointed, and approved by the Father, the true anti-type of the passover, without blemish. As he was thus a fit victim, so was he also a fit priest. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens : who needeth not daily, as those high priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's : for this he did once, when he offered up himself, a spotless victim.—Heb. vii. 26, 27.

He obeyed the law perfectly, for us and in our stead, yet not so as to deliver us from obligation to obey it as the rule of our life. Having thus obeyed it, he was qualified to endure its penalty, not for himself, but for his people; so that, when they embrace him by faith, they are delivered from the curse of the law. As he was righteous and knew no sin, and yet was made sin for us or a sin-offering—was treated as a sinner because our sins were laid on him :—so we, on the exercise of faith in him, are made the righteousness of God in him—are regarded and treated as righteous. Our sins were

imputed to him ; his righteousness is imputed to us : thus by imputation he was made sin ; and we are made the righteousness of God—accepted as righteous on the ground of Christ's righteousness. Free from sin himself, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree ; he was made a curse for us ; and hence he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. By his obedience he merited heaven for us, as by his death he atoned for our sins and delivered us from the curse. Jesus delivers from the wrath to come.—1 Thess. i. 10.

The Lamb Slain.

The lamb was to be slain. And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.—Exod. xii. 6. It was to be killed by shedding its blood. This was “to denote that the death of Christ was necessary, for satisfying justice, and reconciling us to God. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things ?”—Luke xxiv. 26. “It was not enough that the paschal lamb should be selected, it must also be slain. It was not enough that Jesus Christ should come into the world, take upon him our nature, live a life of poverty and self-denial, set before men a perfect example, magnify the law and make it honourable ; all this was not enough. He must also endure the penalty of the law. An atonement is necessary. He must die upon the cross. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Without the death of Christ there is no salvation

and no hope. Jesus Christ came to die ; he came to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He laid down his life that he might take it again. He was delivered up to death for our offences, and he rose again for our justification. In the death of Christ we have the substance of what the Jews saw in shadow when they killed the passover. Through it they looked forward to that to which we now look back through the gospel and its ordinances, viz. : the atonement of Christ by his death upon the cross. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—Isa. liii. 5, 6. Christ died for the ungodly. Our sins nailed him to the accursed tree. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.—Rom. v. 6—9. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We love him, because he first loved us.—1 John iv. 10, 19.

Blood upon the Door-posts.

The blood of the lamb was not only to be shed, but it was also to be put upon the posts of the doors. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side-posts and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.—Exod. xii. 7. This was a signal to the destroying angel to pass

over these houses ; and the blood thus placed upon the doors pointed to the meritorious blood of Christ. “It signified that it is only in virtue of the blood or satisfaction of Christ, that the curse and sentence of the law, (which is the wrath of God,) is not executed upon the sinner. Being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”—Rom. v. 9.

Subsequent passovers differed somewhat from the first in some circumstances. But essentially they were the same, and they were regulated by the law of Moses. At all times “the passover was a sacrifice.” It possessed “all the essential characteristics” of a sacrifice. Says Magee, “It was a *corban*, or *offering, brought to the tabernacle, or temple*: thus in Deut. xvi. 2, 5, 6, Thou shalt *sacrifice* the passover unto the Lord thy God, *in the place* which the Lord shall choose—not within *any* of the gates—but at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose. So in 2 Chron. xxxv. 12. The paschal lamb was slain in the temple ; its blood was poured out, sprinkled, and offered at the altar by the priests, in like manner as the blood of the victims usually slain in sacrifice, as appears from Exod. xxiii. 18, Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread : the *blood*, then, was to be *offered*. So Exod. xxxiv. 25. In 2 Chron. xxx. 15, 16, it is said, Then they killed the passover—the priests *sprinkled the blood* ; and so in 2 Chron. xxxv. 11. And in this sprinkling of the blood, as we are told by the Jewish

doctors, consisted the very essence of a *sacrifice*. The fat and entrails were burnt upon the altar, as may be collected from the passages above referred to, as also from the declaration of the Jewish doctors, the descriptions of the paschal sacrifice in the Mishnah of the Talmud, and the testimony of the Karaites, who are known to reject all the Talmudical traditions, not founded on Scripture." In the first passover, the blood was put upon the door-posts, Exod. xii. 7; after that it was sprinkled upon the altar or poured out before it. "The blood and fat, as in the case of other sacrifices, were appropriated to the altar.—Deut. xvi. 1-7. * * * * The blood was handed to the priests, to be sprinkled on the altar and poured out at its bottom, and the common portions of fat to be burned upon its tops." It was a solemn sacrifice.—Exod. xxxiv. 25. 2 Chron. xxx. 15, 16, and xxxv. 6, 11, 12, 13.

I think the above extract from Magee, on the atonement, substantiates the position that "the *passover was a sacrifice*." I think, moreover, that it cannot be disproved, and it ought not to be doubted, that it was not only a *commemorative*, but a *typical sacrifice*. All the sacrifices of the law were typical; this was especially so. It *commemorated* the deliverance of Israel from Egypt by the destruction of the first-born of every family; and it *typified* the atonement of Jesus Christ and the deliverance of sinners from the thraldom of sin in virtue of that atonement. And if the passover was a *sacrifice*,

and at the same time a *type* of Jesus Christ and his atonement, then Jesus Christ was a *sacrifice*, and his death was a *sacrifice for sin*, a satisfaction, an atonement, a propitiation. For even *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*. The death of Christ, then, is more than the death of a martyr ; his death is more than an example ; it is more than the death of a mere man, however good, great, or exalted ; it is more than the death of a mere creature, be that creature as much above the noblest angel as the meanest of Adam's race is beneath it ! Yes, he was the Son of God—God manifest in the flesh—and his death was a sacrifice, the consummation of an atonement for sin. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.—Isa. liii. 5, 6. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was *once offered to bear* the sins of many ; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin. (or a sin-offering, having no sins laid on him then,) unto salvation.—Heb. ix. 27, 28. Unto salvation ! Had there been *no sacrifice for sin*, there could have been *no salvation* ; but now, since Christ has died, died to atone for sin, shed his blood for the remission of sins, there is salvation for man ; a door of hope is open, a way of escape from the wrath to come, and the voice of mercy cries, Escape for thy life ! Escape !!

"The voice of free grace cries, Escape to the mountain,
For Adam's lost race Christ hath opened a fountain :
For sin and transgression and every pollution,
His blood flows most freely in streams of salvation.
Hallelujah to the Lamb, who has purchased our pardon :
We will praise him again when we pass over Jordan."

Blood on the door-posts, and the angel of death passed over ! Blood shed, and blood applied ! It is only by the blood of Christ that we can escape eternal death. That blood has been shed, it must also be applied. It must be put upon our souls. We must be made partakers of its efficacy, of its virtue and power. As it was put upon the door-posts and sprinkled upon the altar, so it must be sprinkled upon us, applied by the Holy Ghost, received and appropriated by faith, for it is the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.—Heb. xii. 24. Christians are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.—1 Pet. i. 2. Having, therefore, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh ; and having a high priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.—Heb. x. 19-22. Let us seek to have the blood of Christ applied to our souls, for his blood cleanseth from all sin, and

this only can save us from coming wrath.—1 John i. 7; Rom. v. 1, 9.

“See, in the Saviour’s dying blood,
Life, health, and bliss abundant flow;
'Tis only this dear saered flood
Can ease thy pain and heal thy wo.”

The Flesh Roasted.

The flesh of the lamb was to be *roasted with fire*. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, *roast with fire*, and unleavened bread. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire.—Ex. xii. 8, 9. We are not to infer that it was customary with the Jews to eat flesh raw; but as some of the heathen were given to this unseemly practice in their idolatrous rites, the Lord saw fit to forbid the Jews so doing, that they might avoid everything superstitious, unseemly, and heathenish. Roasting the flesh in the fire was not without solemn and awful import. It taught the ill-desert of sin. “The Jewish burnt-offerings not only prefigured the atoning sacrifice of Christ, but showed that, as the animal was slain, so the offerer of the sacrifice deserved death for his sins: and as the animal was consumed, so he deserved to consume away for ever under the wrath of God.” Similar in import was the slaying of the paschal lamb, and the roasting of its flesh in the fire. It taught what the sinner *deserved* to suffer, and what Christ *should suffer* for sin. The flesh was “to be roasted with fire, to intimate that Christ’s sufferings, as our Surety, were

exquisitely and inconceivably great, without the least abatement of any of that wrath which was due to our sins. It pleased the Lord to bruise him. God spared not his own Son."—Isa. lii. 5; Rom. viii. 32. Christ has suffered, the just for the unjust. And if he who knew no sin, and only had our sins laid on him, suffered so much, what, think ye, does the sinner himself deserve to suffer? And what, think you, must he suffer, if he neglect this great salvation? See the sacrifice consuming with fire, and remember it is an emblem of the wrath of God due to sin, and behold in it an emblem of what must be endured for ever in the pit of despair by the impenitent and unbelieving! And may the goodness of God in furnishing the great salvation, and the apprehensions of his just displeasure, lead you to the exercise of unfeigned repentance and to faith in Christ, for our God is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. His wrath will consume those who take not refuge in the atoning blood of Christ. His vengeance will burn like fire.

The Flesh Eaten.

The roasted flesh of the paschal lamb was to be eaten. And they shall *eat the flesh*—roast with fire!—eat—not raw, nor sodden, but roast with fire.—Ex. xii. 8, 9. The flesh was not to be entirely consumed, but so prepared as to be suitable for food; and when thus prepared, it was to be eaten. This indicates that the atonement of Christ is to be ap-

propriated by faith. It must be received by us and rested on. He speaks of giving us his flesh to eat; and he says, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.—John vi. 53. Not that we are to eat his flesh and drink his blood literally, but by faith; receiving and resting on him as our Saviour, and so becoming partakers of the benefits of his incarnation, sufferings and death. As the Jews partook of the paschal supper, so we are to accept of Christ as our deliverer, and draw our supplies from him. He is the bread of life; and we must feed by faith on the Son of God. The atonement of Christ will be of no saving benefit to us, unless we make it ours by the exercise of faith. The gospel provision must be eaten, or our souls will starve and die of hunger. We must believe if we would be saved. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.—John vi. 53-58.

Wholly Eaten or Burned.

The paschal lamb was to be wholly eaten, or if any remained in the morning it was to be burned. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.—Exod. xii. 10. “It was to be eaten wholly and entirely, and none of it left, to signify that Christ was to be wholly applied,

in a way of believing, as being of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption—1 Cor. i. 30 ; while the annexed order, that if any part of the lamb was left, it should, before the morning, be burned with fire, and not reserved either for food or any superstitious purposes, implied that it was a *solemn propitiatory sacrifice* of awful import, and not merely a cheerful festival.” It pointed directly to Christ ; and we are to receive Jesus Christ as a complete and perfect and an all-sufficient Saviour. We are to take him in all his offices, as offered to us in the gospel, and rest on him for acceptance with God. We are to receive and rely upon him as our Prophet, Priest, and King, the only Mediator. The rejection of his offices, or of any part of his mediatorial character or work, is the rejection of him as our Saviour and the ruin of our souls. They who have Christ must have a whole Christ—the God-man, or no Christ. Is Christ divided ? Shall we attempt to divide him ? Shall we deprecate his work or his person, take away vicarious satisfaction from the one or divinity from the other ? Shall we rob him of one excellency after another, and fritter away his character, till there is nothing left but creature excellencies, angelic it may be, or super-human, but yet finite ? Let me be a Judas or a Pilate rather ! They who nailed the Saviour to the cross, and piercéd him with a spear, are innocent, compared with those who would take from him the crown of divinity, or deny

the atoning merit of his blood ! No ; we must take the Saviour as presented in the gospel—"man to die, God to redeem ;" we must receive him wholly, rely on him fully, and let no other trust intrude between him and our guilty souls. We must go to him as we are, and receive him as he is, while the language of our souls is, Jesus, and Jesus fully, and Jesus only ! Christ must be to us all in all ; for he will be everything or nothing. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell ; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.—Col. i. 19, 20, and ii. 9. John i. 16, 17. And ye are complete in him.—Col. ii. 10. Accepted in the beloved.—Eph. i. 6.

All Eat at the Same Time.

All the families of Israel were to eat the passover at *one and the same time*. And they shall eat the flesh in that night ; at the same hour all the families were to eat.—Exod. xii. 8. This was "to signify that there is enough in Christ to satisfy the need of his people *at once*, for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."—Col. ii. 9. It pleased the Father that in him should *all fulness dwell*. There is in him an infinite fulness—an infinite sufficiency. There is no want in our natures, nor in

our circumstances, which is not met by his all-sufficiency. All we need for time and eternity is in him ; and there is in him enough for all, and for all at once. The sacrifice which he has made is of infinite value. It lays the foundation for the offer of life to the world. It authorizes the preaching of the gospel to every creature. Let all come who will come, and yet there is room. He that cometh shall in no wise be cast out, for Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him.—Heb. vii. 25. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—Rev. xxii. 17. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth : for I am God, and there is none else.—Isa. xlv. 22. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters ; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.—Isa. lv. 1.

Eaten in Haste.

The passover was to be eaten the same night in which it was slain and *in haste*. “The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening, and they shall eat the flesh in that night, and ye shall eat it *in haste*.—Exod. xii. 6, 8, 11. This was to signify that Christ ought to be applied and appropriated by faith speedily, without delay. Behold, now is the accepted time.”—2 Cor. vi. 2. The Saviour should be embraced in haste ; no time is to be lost. There is no time for delay. The offer

should be accepted, the first invitation embraced. The sacrifice is offered, the lamb is slain, the provision is made, all things are ready; come to the feast. Come, eat and live! Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.—Matt. xi. 28-30.

“Ho, all ye hungry, starving souls,
Who feed upon the wind,
And vainly strive, with earthly toys,
To fill an empty mind:
Eternal wisdom has prepared
A soul-reviving feast;
And bids your longing appetites
The rich provision taste.”

All Concerned.

All Israel were concerned in the matter.—Ex. xii. 6, 8, 11. The *whole assembly* of the congregation of Israel were to kill the paschal lamb, and all were to eat of it. All were interested. And so Jesus Christ was put to death on Calvary, in the presence of the whole city of Jerusalem, or where nearly the whole city could see the solemn transaction; and it was witnessed not only by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but also by the multitudes gathered from all parts of Judea to celebrate the feast of the passover. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so has the Son of man been lifted up. He is made a spectacle to the world. To him the past

ages looked forward; to him the following ages look back. By the preaching of the gospel, all eyes are directed to him. To him the messengers of the cross point their hearers, and say, Behold the Lamb of God! And every man has an interest in this matter. His own salvation is concerned. His eternal all is at stake. He must lay hold on Christ for himself or perish. He must believe or be damned. This one thing is needful. Let it be heeded. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

—Matt. vi. 33.

Not a Bone Broken.

The very circumstances of the crucifixion were foreshadowed in the passover institution. The lamb was to be roasted whole, and not a bone of it broken.—Ex. xii. 9, 46. This was fulfilled in Jesus Christ; he was nailed to the cross, he was pierced with a spear, but not a bone of him was broken. Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.—John xix. 31-37. Thus in him were the Scriptures fulfilled. He is the promised Messiah; the substance of the law's shadows, the truth of what the prophets foretold, the fulfilment of Old Testament types, the true passover. Even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. They who are sprinkled with his blood

are secure from the destroying angel. Over them the second death can have no power. Their sins are removed, their transgressions covered, their souls are safe, and they have peace and joy. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—Rom. v. 1. For he is our peace; having made peace through the blood of his cross.—Eph. ii. 14; Col. i. 20.

It is to be remembered, too, that our Lord was crucified at the time of the Jewish passover; and now, instead of that festival, we are to keep a life-long feast, and we have also the Lord's Supper, which was instituted by him the night before his crucifixion, and which is to be observed by his people until his second coming. Hence let us now consider the duty of commemorating the sacrifice of Christ. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.

The Feast to be Kept.

The passover is slain, the feast is to be kept. And let us keep the feast, first, by *believing in him*. We must believe. As Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us—has died in our stead and made an atonement for our sins—we should keep the feast by embracing him as our Saviour, feeding on him by faith, and living to his glory. As the Jews fed on the paschal lamb, which was a type of Christ, and thus kept the feast of the passover, so we are to embrace Christ's atonement, believe in him as

our Saviour, feed on him by faith, and so live as to honour and glorify him, and thus keep the gospel feast. Christ is our passover, or paschal lamb, sacrificed for us, and to keep the feast, is, in the first place, and as our first duty, by faith to receive Jesus Christ, and thus avail ourselves of the benefits of this sacrifice. The first duty, then, that we may commemorate the sacrifice of Christ, is to *believe in him*. Without this no other commemoration will be of any avail. We must come to Christ and trust in him, or we cannot keep the feast. To come to him is the first duty; but this first duty does not exclude a second; this commemoration does not exclude another, very significant and important. It is indeed but the beginning of the feast; it ends only with life—nor even then; for death introduces us to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and that is as lasting as eternity. It shall never end. It begins when we believe; for the joys of the redeemed on earth and in heaven are one, of the same nature, differing only in degree. “Salvation is not merely a future though certain good; it is a present and abundant joy.” And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement, or reconciliation.—Rom. v. 8-11.

A Life-long Festival.

The whole Christian life is a feast of consecration to God. The sacrifice of the Jewish passover was to be

followed by a seven days' festival—seven days consecrated to God. Christ our passover being sacrificed for us, the Christian life is to be a perpetual festival, a life-long paschal feast, a perpetual consecration to God, begun in the reception of him by faith, continued in a life of obedience and of constant feeding upon him. We are to live by faith on the Son of God ; we are to feed on him ; we are to draw all our supplies and all our comforts from him ; we are to honour and glorify him ; we are to live, not to ourselves, but to him ; we are to be wholly devoted and entirely consecrated to his service while life lasts and while immortality endures. Our paschal lamb is slain ; let us keep the feast ; let our whole lives be one paschal festival, lives of trust in Christ, lives of sorrow for sin, lives of joy for deliverance, lives of gratitude and thanksgiving, lives of cheerful obedience, lives of consecration to our Master's service, lives of self-denial and sacrifice for the world's good, lives of toil, lives of prayer and praise, lives of deadness to sin and the world, lives of sincerity and truth in doing our Master's will, lives of holiness, departing from all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, adorning in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour.—*Titus ii. 10-14.* He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—*1 John ii. 6, and iii. 2, 3.* For even Christ our

passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—1 Cor. v. 6-8. “To keep the feast means, ‘Let your whole lives be as a sacred festival, that is, consecrated to God.’ As a feast lasting seven days was connected with the slaying of the paschal lamb; so a life of consecration to God should be connected with the death of our passover—Christ.” A life-long feast; such is the Christian life. He lives not to himself, but to God; for he is not his own: he is bought with a price—redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.—1 Pet. i. 18-21.

The Lord's Supper.

The death of Christ is to be commemorated. It must be kept in perpetual remembrance. Thus Paul wrote to the Corinthians, For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this

bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.—1 Cor. xi. 23—26. This is one of the means which God has appointed for sustaining the life of grace in the soul; a help to a life of consecration to God. Therefore let us keep the feast, the feast of the Lord's supper, which commemorates the sacrifice of Christ our passover, as a means of spiritual growth and of faithfulness in his service. As the Jews kept the passover, which was a type of the sacrifice of Christ; so we are to keep the feast of the Lord's supper, which is a commemoration of that sacrifice. The feast of the passover was a *feast upon a sacrifice*, typifying a nobler sacrifice and commemorating deliverance from bondage. The Lord's supper is a feast commemorative of that nobler sacrifice which the passover shadowed forth, and is to be observed in remembrance of that sacrifice—of him who was slain and of the deliverance wrought by his death. It is a commemorative ordinance. Therefore let us keep the feast; let us celebrate the dying love of Jesus Christ; let us keep in mind the passover slain for us. He hath said, This do in remembrance of me. By this ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come. The duty of keeping this feast, which takes the place of the Jewish passover, is one which is plainly inculcated, one which I know not how any who love the Saviour can feel themselves justified in neglecting. It is expressly enjoined by Jesus Christ himself, and is enforced by his example: it is enjoined by apostolic

authority, and enforced by the practice of the primitive church; the example of the church in all ages enforces it; and when viewed as a memento of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ for sin, simple, appropriate, touching, who would not say, As Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast. It is an imperious duty and a glorious privilege. This is our passover festival—a remembrance of the Son of God in his sufferings and death for us. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.—1 Cor. xi. 28.

How to keep the Feast.

Let us now look at the manner of commemorating the sacrifice of Christ, or of keeping our passover. Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. Keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.—1 Cor. v. 6-8. This teaches us how we are to keep the feast, both as it respects the reception of the atonement by faith and the life of holiness we are to lead, and also as it respects the commemoration of Christ's sacrifice in the holy supper.

What is Needed.

To avail ourselves of the atonement, we must believe in Jesus Christ; we are, by divine grace, to purge out the old leaven, repent of and forsake

our sins, and rest by faith on Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. We cannot have Christ and keep our sins; we cannot have pardon and peace, and yet remain in unbelief. We cannot keep the gospel feast with our hearts filled with the leaven of malice and wickedness. As Christ died for sin, so we must die to sin. The first step to a holy life is to come to Christ for life. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Burdened with a sense of sin, we must go to him, and rely upon him, and our sins shall be forgiven. Christ will be our peace and our salvation. He says, This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

After thus availing ourselves of the atonement and its benefits, we are to walk in newness of life, remembering that we are not our own, because we are bought with a price; we are to hold a life-long festival—a perpetual eucharist—live a life of consecration to God; and as a part of our duty, and as a means of spiritual growth, we are, at suitable times, to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ in the sacrament of the Supper. And while the language of the disciple is applicable to the whole Christian life, it is specially applicable to this particular occasion. It teaches us how we are to come to this feast, or the spirit we are to possess, the preparation of heart which is necessary. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this

cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.—1 Cor. xi. 26-30.

Old Leaven.

We are not to keep this feast—nor our life-festival—with old leaven, with sin retained and practised. Our hearts must be changed and purified before we are prepared to partake of these emblems. We must be born again, become new creatures in Christ Jesus, old things must pass away, all things become new. The old leaven must be purged out, that we may be a new lump, unleavened, holy. “As the Corinthians were to purge out the leaven of heathen licentiousness, and every evil habit and practice, so we are to eradicate every disposition, habit, and practice, as to its allowed indulgence, which is opposed to the divine will. Our old sins are to be forsaken, and new dispositions, habits, and practices are to be cherished. Put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”—Eph. iv. 20-24.

Leaven of Malice and Wickedness.

Neither are we to keep this feast—nor our life-festival—with the leaven of malice and wickedness. We are to cherish no unkind nor improper feelings towards our fellow-men. We are to have a charitable and forgiving spirit. If others trespass against us, we are to forgive. We must harbour no malice, for that is murder. Nor is wickedness to be indulged. Every unholy motion and desire is to be banished from our hearts, every sinful affection is to be mortified; we are to love all men, love our neighbours as ourselves; and hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Let brotherly love continue. The love of God must be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us; the love of Christ must constrain us; we must be controlled by love; and love must dwell in our hearts and be shown in our lives. See in the bread and wine the tokens of Christ's love; and how can we think of keeping this feast with the leaven of malice and wickedness? No, these must be banished! Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore

followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.—Eph. iv. 25–32; and v. 1–7.

Unleavened Bread.

No; we must keep this feast—and our life-festival—with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. The Jewish passover must be kept without leaven; and so in the feast, commemorative of the sacrifice of Christ our passover, we must have no unhallowed leaven. There must be no leaven of malice and wickedness—no leaven of insincerity—no leaven of unfaithfulness; we must be sincere—sincere in our reception of Christ—sincere in our professions of attachment to him—sincere in our acts of worship—sincere in the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and celebrate what we profess to, the dying and atoning love of Jesus Christ. We must be sincere in our whole lives. There must be no leaven of deception, nor of hypocrisy. We must have the unleavened bread of truth, as well as of sincerity. We may be sincere, and yet be deceived. Sincerity is no infallible evidence of correctness. We must have truth on our side, and in our hearts, as well as sincerity. We must believe and obey the truth. We must speak the truth in all our professions and doings, in all our intercourse with God and men. We must love the truth, seek the truth, prize the truth, be willing to suffer for

the truth, know the truth, that the truth may make us free. “We must possess that inward state which answers to the truth, that moral condition which is conformed to the law and character of God.” Our characters must be of “transparent clearness,” and conformed to the divine. In a moral point of view, we must be like God, conformed to the image of his Son. In this ordinance—and in our whole lives—we must be sincere and true, believe what it signifies, mean what we profess, and do what we covenant and promise. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Let our lives be a constant passover festival, a perpetual eucharist, a constant honouring of Christ by lives of faith in him and of obedience to him. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Ye are a

chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.—1 Pet. ii. 1-10.

Useful Lessons.

1. There is an atonement. The paschal lamb was a sacrifice; and this was a type of Christ. Hence it is written, Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. He gave himself a ransom. In him we have redemption through his blood. He is the propitiation for our sins. By his death he has made an atonement for sin. Hence there is hope for man. There is salvation, because Christ has died.

2. This atonement is to be received and relied on by faith. The provision is to be partaken of, the bread of life eaten, the feast kept. In this atonement let me beseech you to put your trust; on this Saviour cast your souls; believe, that you may be saved.

3. The atoning death of Christ should be celebrated. Why should it not be? What event in the world's history more worthy of commemoration than the death of Jesus Christ? And when he has said, This do in remembrance of me, shall we not do this? Christ our passover being sacrificed for us, shall we not keep the feast? Shall we not connect with his death and with our faith in him a life devoted to his service—a life of trust—a life of obedience?

4. The commemoration of this event—the death of Christ—should have an abiding influence upon us. The old leaven of a corrupt nature, and the leaven of malice and wickedness, should be purged out, never more to be admitted. The unleavened bread of sincerity and truth should ever abide with us—through all our life-festival. When we go from this ordinance, and from every act of worship, we should not forget its solemnities, but carry its hallowed influence with us in all the walks and business of life, and thus perpetuate the feast while life lasts. Christ is our passover; and for us to live is Christ; and then to die will be gain.

5. Let sinners avail themselves of the sacrifice of Christ. He has opened the way of salvation to you, reader, and he invites you to enter it. Listen to his voice; enter, and enter now, that you may be saved!

Hymn.

“Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

“But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away:
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

“My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

“My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

“Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove ;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing his bleeding love.”

II.

THE GREAT THINGS OF THE LAW.

I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.—Hosea viii. 12.

Great things accounted strange.

THIS is brought as a serious charge against Ephraim, or the ten tribes of Israel. They had broken off from the other two tribes, and instead of worshipping the true God, had turned away after idols. They set up altars to their false gods, and delighted in serving them. This their way was their folly and their sin ; and it was declared that their conduct was peculiarly sinful, and should bring upon them the righteous displeasure of their neglected and injured Maker. Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin. I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing. They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it ; but the Lord accepteth them not ; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins : they shall return to Egypt—they shall be punished. For Israel hath forgotten his Maker,—Hos. viii. 11-14 ; accounted great things strange things.

Great Things of the Law.

It is proposed to consider some of the great things of the law written to Israel and how they were counted as a strange thing. The laws of the Jews, which are the laws of God, are divided into moral and positive. The positive are subdivided into ceremonial and judicial. The judicial laws of the Jews relate to political matters, and need not be brought into view in this discussion. Our attention will be confined to the great things of the moral and ceremonial laws of the Jews; and may the Great Lawgiver teach us, that we may not err; may he guide us into all truth, and help us to love his law, to delight in the law of God after the inward man, the renewed heart. May he so help us that we may never count the great things of the law a strange thing!

The Moral Law.

In the first place, we are to consider, for our instruction, the great things of the moral law. I have written to him the great things of my law, the great things of the moral law. The word moral literally has respect to the manners of men;* but when ap-

* Much in these pages may be found in FISHER'S CATECHISM, published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. The language of that work is also used to some extent, without quotation marks, this general acknowledgment being deemed sufficient. It is thought many may like to see in a small compass what is there scattered over several pages, especially as all may not have access to that excellent book.

plied to the law, it signifies that which is perpetually binding, in opposition to that which is binding only for a time. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments; but a fair copy of it was originally written upon the heart and mind of man at his first creation; because he was made after the image of God. This law, written on the heart, is sometimes called the law of nature, because it is that necessary, unalterable rule of right and wrong, founded in the infinitely holy and just nature of God, and whereunto men, as reasonable creatures, cannot but be indispensably bound. This law, written on the heart of man when created in the image of God, is the natural instinct of the reasonable creature, implanted in the soul by God himself. This law can never be entirely obliterated, for all men have innate principles of right and wrong, implanted in their natures. Yet it has become corrupted, perverted, and obscured by the fall, so that it is insufficient to guide men in the path of duty here, and of course insufficient to conduct them to eternal life hereafter. Although God inscribed his law on the heart of man when he created him, yet, because of the introduction of sin, it became necessary for God to write to him in another form the great things of his law. This he did in the ten commandments. When and how these were given, you may read in Exodus, chapters xix. and xx. From the remarks previously made, it may be inferred that the moral law and the law of nature are

the same; and so they are for substance. The law of nature is the law written on man's heart when created; the moral law, properly so called, is contained in the ten commandments. Although the same duties, which are contained in the law of nature, are prescribed also in the moral law; yet there is this difference, that in the law of nature, there is nothing but what is moral, that is, of perpetual obligation; but in the moral law, there is something also that is positive, namely, the means of worship, and circumscribing the particular day for the observation of the Sabbath. That God is to be worshipped, is a dictate of the law of nature; and this is a moral law, perpetually binding; but the manner of his worship must depend on his will, and he may change it as he pleases—he may require men to offer sacrifices, as he did the Jews; or he may dispense with them, as he now does. Again, if God is to be worshipped, then some particular time must be set apart for his worship. This is a dictate of the law of nature, perpetually binding; but what time, must depend on his will, and he may change it as he pleases. Under the Jewish dispensation, he may require the observance of the seventh day of the week, and under the gospel, the observance of the first day as the Sabbath. Hence the law of the Sabbath is partly moral and partly positive. That a Sabbath should be observed, that is, a day set apart for the worship of God, is a moral law, perpetually binding; but that it should now be the first

day of the week to be thus observed, is a positive law, depending, for its authority, upon the will of the Divine Lawgiver. It is proper, however, that the law of the Sabbath, being in its essential part moral, should have a place in the moral law; and the fact that it is placed there by infinite wisdom and goodness, teaches that it may not be innocently disregarded, and will never be abrogated. While time endures we shall be bound to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. In this respect God has written to us the great things of his law, and we must beware how we count them as a strange thing! If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

The Rule and the Reason.

Now the moral law must not only be regarded as the rule of our obedience, but also as the reason thereof. We must not only do what is commanded in the law, and avoid what is forbidden therein; but we must also do good, for this very reason, that God requires it; and avoid evil, because he forbids

it. I am the Lord your God: ye shall *therefore* keep my statutes, and my judgments.—Lev. xviii. 4, 5. As to the duties required in the law, they are just and reasonable in their own nature, antecedently to any divine precept about them, being founded in the very holiness and wisdom of God, and growing out of our relations to him and to each other. Hence the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.—Rom. vii. 12. It commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. It coincides with our sense of right and wrong. Yet its claims conflict with the natural inclinations of our corrupt hearts. By nature we have no love for the law, any more than we have for its great Author, for we are sinners. We disregard the law. We hate it. We esteem it a strange thing, or we make ourselves strangers to its holy and spiritual requisitions. So did the Jews, and exposed themselves to its curse. To that curse we are exposed; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.—Gal. iii. 10.

Redemption Necessary.

It was needful that Christ should come to redeem them and us from the curse of the law. That curse is eternal death—a great thing and a fearful thing. It was the moral law that Christ came to honour; it was the curse of this law that he bare for us; and from this curse that he redeems his people,

being made a curse for them.—Gal. iii. 13. He came not to mend the law, nor to give a new law; but to honour the old, and deliver his chosen from its penalty. He acted the part of an interpreter and defender of the law, but not of a new lawgiver, as is evident from his explaining the law, and vindicating it in his sermon on the mount from the corrupt glosses that were put upon it. When he said, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, he intended only to enforce the substance of the old law by the new motive and example of his unparalleled love to us, imported in the words immediately following: As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.—John xiii. 34. The apostle gives expression to this new motive when he says, For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.—2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Christ Died.

Jesus Christ has loved us with a love stronger than death. He laid down his life for us. He died for our sins. The sacrifice which he then made is a perfect and sufficient sacrifice. On him was laid the iniquity of us all. By his obedience, sufferings, and death, he has made an atonement for sin which satisfies the claims of the divine law, satisfies per-

fectly the justice of God. This atonement is of infinite value. It is sufficient for the world; yea, for ten thousand worlds, were such the purpose and the pleasure of God. It could not be more valuable, for it is infinite; and must, therefore, be sufficient—sufficient for all. It is, moreover, adapted to the wants of all. Just such provision is made by Christ and in him, as every sinner needs. In Christ every sinner may find a Saviour adapted to his necessities. Hence the atonement is adapted to all. It is, moreover, available to all; that is, there is nothing in its nature to exclude any from its benefits who are really desirous to partake of them. It is freely offered to all; and it is declared, Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.—Rev. xxii. 17. It follows that, as the atonement is sufficient for all, and adapted to all, and available to all, and offered to all, they who die in their sins must be without excuse. There is nothing in the atonement, nothing in the plan of salvation, which can be the reason why they perish. We must look for that reason in their own corrupt hearts. They wilfully and sinfully reject offered mercy; they account the great things of the law, and of the gospel too, a strange thing, and remain aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.—Eph. ii. 12. In the sinner's own heart, then, we find the reason why he perishes; it is because of his sins, and for this cause he is foreordained to eternal

wrath. He is not made on purpose to be damned, but damned on purpose because he is a sinner. This may be a great thing, but surely we should not count it a strange thing. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?—Rom. ix. 18-24.

Why any Perish.

It seems, then, that we can account very well for the perdition of them that perish. Although there is an infinite—an all-sufficient—atonement, they do not accept it when offered to them, and they die because they come not to Christ. And whether any other doctrine in the Christian system can be explained, or accounted for, or not, this one thing I am persuaded is too clear to be doubted or denied, —that *they who perish are without excuse*. Let, then, this principle be settled; and let us be fully persuaded that if we perish, we can blame none but ourselves. Then let us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, and see to it that we make our calling and election sure. Awake thou that

sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.—Eph. v. 14.

Why any are Saved.

But if we are saved, what then? Shall we owe it to ourselves? How shall we account for the salvation of those who are saved? Is it because they are better by nature than others? or better by practice? or because they of themselves repent and believe, or change their own hearts and sanctify their own souls? Far from it. How then is it to be accounted for? We have seen that the atonement is sufficient for all, adapted to all, available for all, offered to all, yet all are not saved. Though the atonement is sufficient for all, yet it is clear that it is not efficient to all. Yet it is efficient to some, and this is the thing to be accounted for. Some are saved, how shall we account for it? We must go to the Bible, and we must submit to the teachings of the Bible. Well, what does the Bible teach in regard to this great thing? When we open this sacred volume, and look for light on this dark point, we are directed by the Spirit of inspiration to the purpose of God according to election. We read that the people of Christ were given to him by the Father as a seed to serve him; that they are chosen in him, that is, in Christ, before the foundation of the world—according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.—Eph. i. 4. Chosen us in him—chosen in Christ. It seems,

then, that they who are saved were chosen in Christ before the world began. To these, then, the Father had special regard in the plan of redemption, for he gave them to his Son; to these the Son had special regard in his work, for they are the sheep for whom he gave his life; and to these the Holy Ghost has special regard in applying the benefits of Christ's death. For these Christ was a substitute and surety; and his sufferings were a true and proper substitution for what they deserved to suffer, and must have suffered, had he not died for them and in their stead. Hence the atonement which he made secures their salvation; because they were given him of the Father, he had special reference to them in his work, and the Holy Spirit carries out the scheme of mercy by renewing their hearts and applying to them the benefits purchased by atoning blood. Christ purchased for them the Spirit; and it is because the Spirit gives them a new heart that they repent and believe. Their salvation, therefore, is all of grace, and must be traced back to the electing love of God. And while eternal ages roll on, they will cry, Grace, grace unto it.

“Grace first contrived the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps *that grace display,*
Which drew the wondrous plan.”

God's Pleasure.

If it be asked why God chooses some and not others, it may be answered, why did he choose any?

Why does he save any? He was under no obligation to save any; he might have left all to perish; and may he not have mercy on whom he will, and do what he pleases with his own, when none perish, and none are punished, but because of their sins? Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?—Rom. ix. 18-21. This is one of the great things which he chooses not to explain; and it becomes us to say, Even so, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. The fact that some are chosen and others not, alters not our duty. Salvation is to be freely offered to all; and all who have the offer made them are bound to accept it, and if they refuse, it is at their peril. Reader, the offer is made to you! In the name of Christ, I offer you salvation: I offer it to you freely, without money and without price; and I assure you that if you come to Christ, you shall in no wise be cast out. Now do you say to me, "I may not be elected, and I do not know, therefore, whether I shall be accepted or not?" I answer that I have nothing to do with that matter, and you have nothing to do with it. Your business is to come to Christ, and to come to-day, right where you are, and to come now; and when you come and are rejected, it will be time enough to say you were not elected. You say you may not be elected, and therefore may not be received if you come to Christ; I say to you in the words of Jesus Christ himself,—Him that cometh to

me I will in no wise cast out. John vi. 37. Now will you contradict the blessed Redeemer? May not be received? But Christ says you shall be received; that he will give you rest. Not received? Why you might just as well say, God knows whether I shall be saved or not; so it is certain, or else he could not know it, and if certain one way or the other, why no anxiety of mine about it can alter the matter; then why should I be concerned? Why concerned? Because your soul is in danger. Its eternity is at stake. You must be concerned or die in your sins. Remember, God's knowledge, and God's purposes, are not the rule of your duty. Your duty is made known in the Bible; and you must do it, or you will perish in your sins, and that justly. So the Bible teaches; and so you must do or die!

You see, then, that the views advanced do not hinder from urging men everywhere to flee immediately to Christ for life and salvation. This is our duty; and again I point you to Christ and beseech you to lay hold on the hope set before you. Behold the Lamb of God! Look and live! Do you again say, "I have a wicked heart; I cannot change my own heart; if God do not please to give me faith and repentance, I cannot help it; I am altogether dependent upon him?" Dependent, and you can't help it! I want to put a question directly to your heart,—Do you feel perfectly innocent while making this objection? Does not something whisper, "I

have not tried to help it?" Ah, did you truly feel your helplessness and dependence, there might be some hope. Then you would begin to ask God for help; you would cry then, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" Oh, that you would thus cry! I know, reader, that you are helpless; I know you are dependent upon divine grace; and I would to God you might be truly sensible of it! Did you but feel it as you ought, you would begin now, right where you are, to call upon God for help. Did you feel that your salvation is altogether in the hands of God, and that he might justly send you to hell at any moment, you would not rest, you would not give sleep to your eyes, nor shiver to your eyelids, till you had evidence of acceptance with him. Yet so it is; you are in his hands; your salvation is suspended upon his sovereign pleasure; he may cut you off in a moment; and will you yet dare to offend him? Will you reject his Son? Will you resist and grieve his Spirit? Will you refuse to call upon his name? And when he has given you the great things of his law and gospel, will you esteem them a strange thing? Reader, there is danger, for our God is a consuming fire! Heb. xii. 29.

The Law Preached.

The great things of the law are to be preached, that men may see their utter impotence and inability to attain justification by the deeds thereof; and thus it is a school-master to bring them to Christ, that

they may be justified by faith. It is spiritual in its demands; it requires spotless holiness of nature, perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience in this life, and full satisfaction for sin, which none of mankind being capable of, they are shut up to the hope of the gospel; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Rom. x. 4. It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Gal. iii. 10. To this curse we are all by nature exposed; condemned, and under the curse, how may we be delivered from it? Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; so that, believing in him, we are delivered from the curse, and are freed from the law as a covenant of life, and are under it only as a rule of life. Gal. iii. 11-14, 21-23. As to unbelievers, the law is intended to teach them their need of Christ and lead them to him for life and salvation; as to believers, it is of use to excite them to express their gratitude and thankfulness to Christ for his fulfilling it as a covenant in their stead; by their studying conformity thereto, both in their hearts and lives, as the rule of their obedience. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. Rom. iii. 31. The law does not abolish, but it establishes the law; hence it is to be preached, and its great things must not be strange to us. Jesus Christ has taken our law-place, and borne its penalty for us. Because he

died, we may live. "If Christ be not the substitute, he is nothing to the sinner. If he did not die as the sin-bearer, he has died in vain. Let us not be deceived on this point, nor misled by those who, when they announce Christ as the deliverer, think they have preached the Gospel. If I throw a rope to a drowning man, I am a deliverer. But is Christ no more than that? If I cast myself into the sea, and risk my life to save another, I am a deliverer. But is Christ no more? Did he but risk his life? The very essence of Christ's deliverance is the substitution of himself for us, his life for ours. He shed his blood for us. Believing what God has testified concerning this blood, we become one with Jesus in his death; and thus we are counted in law, and treated by God as men who have paid the whole penalty, and so been washed from their sins in his blood. Though above law in himself, Christ was made under the law for us, and by the vicarious law-keeping of his spotless life, as well as by the endurance unto death of that law's awful penalties, we are redeemed from the curse of the law." He is our Substitute. He obeyed the law for us; he endured the curse for us; obeyed and died in our stead; and thus he delivered us from the wrath to come. 1 Thess. i. 10.

The Ceremonial Law.

Having dwelt thus long on the moral law, a few words may now be said of the ceremonial law. I

have written to him the great things of my law—of the ceremonial law. This law was a system of positive precepts, about the external worship of God in the Old Testament church; chiefly designed to typify Christ, as then to come, and to lead them to the knowledge of the way of salvation through him. Of this law the principal ceremonies were such as respected sacred persons, places, and things. A few words of each:—

Sacred Persons.

The chief sacred person among the Jews was the high priest. He was a type of Christ in being consecrated with a plentiful effusion of the holy anointing oil, typifying the unmeasurable communication of the Spirit unto Christ; and his bearing the names of the children of Israel upon his shoulder and in the breastplate, signifying that Christ is the representative and substitute of all his spiritual seed, and hath their concerns continually at heart. And as the high priest offered sacrifices, so did Christ offer himself a sacrifice; as the high priest entered the holy of holies and burned incense there, so Christ has entered heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood

of others: for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Heb. ix. 6-12, 24-28. Because the Jews had a high priest, some think the Christian church should have diocesan bishops; but Jesus Christ is our great high priest; he is the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who was typified by the high priest, and the substance being come, we no longer need the shadow. If, because the Jews had a high priest, we should have a corresponding office in the Christian church, then, it is plain, we should have a pope; for the Jews had but one high priest at once, and how this can justify a great many diocesans, I cannot see! The truth is, Jesus Christ is the Bishop and Head of the Christian church; and the high priest among the Jews was but a type of him; and now the antitype is come, why do we need the type or the shadow? We do not. We should bless God for the substance; and Jesus Christ being our high priest, we should avail ourselves of his atonement, and so make our peace with God. Let us not esteem this great thing of the ceremonial law a strange thing, for how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Heb. ii. 3. We have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens. Heb. iv. 14. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. * * * * For such a high priest became us. Heb. vii. 23-28. And as it is ap-

pointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. Heb. ix. 24-28.

Sacred Places.

The sacred places of the ceremonial law were the tabernacle and temple. No description of them need be here given. Amongst other things, they both of them typified the human nature of Christ, which was assumed into union with his divine nature. Thus he said, in reference to his body, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. In these sacred places, the Jews had constantly before them, types or emblems of the human nature of Jesus Christ who was to come—silent but expressive prophecies of the incarnation of the Son of God—and yet how often they despised these great things of the law, and counted them as strange things, turning away after idols; and when the Son of God became incarnate, taking our nature upon him—made in the likeness of sinful flesh—they despised and rejected him and put him to the shameful death of the cross! Beware of their unhappy example, and despise not the Lord of life! He assumed our nature for our sakes: he was God manifest in the flesh for our redemption; and to reject him is to die in sin. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,

and for sin—or, by a sacrifice for sin—condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 3, 4.

Sacred Things.

The sacred things of the ceremonial law were several. One of these was the laver, placed in the outward court of the tabernacle and temple. It was a brazen vessel for holding water, made of looking-glasses, or polished pieces of brass, given by the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, as recorded in the 38th chapter of Exodus. It stood between the tabernacle of the congregation, or holy place, and the altar, that Aaron and his sons might wash their hands and their feet thereat, when they went into the tabernacle, or when they came near to the altar to minister, under no less penalty than death; when they went unto the altar, or into the tabernacle, or holy place, they were to wash or die; and this was to point out the absolute necessity of the application of the blood and Spirit of Christ unto the soul, as that without which there can be no escaping of eternal death. We must experience the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, or perish. Ye must be born again. They who are in the flesh, unrenewed, cannot please God. Regeneration is necessary. We must be sanctified as well as justified. Both these are in Jesus Christ. They are the

purchase of his blood, and they come to all to whom that blood is applied by the Holy Spirit; for he of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. 1 Cor. i. 26-31.

Sacrifices.

There were also sacrifices. These were to be of such clean beasts and fowls as God appointed for the purpose. They were to be without blemish, which signified the spotless holiness of the human nature of Christ, which was sacrificed for us. The sins of the offerers were to be typically laid upon the head of the sacrifice, which signified the laying of the sins of his people upon Christ and his expiating them by his death. The sacrifice must be slain by the shedding of its blood, which taught that Christ should shed his blood for many for the remission of sins, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. Heb. ix. 22. The sacrifice was to be consumed wholly or in part with fire upon the altar, which signified that the whole of that infinite wrath, which was due to sinners, and would have been consuming them for ever, was poured out upon the glorious surety, Jesus Christ, and was endured by him. The altar upon which the sacrifices were offered and consumed, was the brazen altar, or altar of burnt-offering; and as the altar sanctifieth the gift, so this altar typified the divine nature of Christ as giving infinite worth and value to the sacrifice of the human nature, because of the

personal union of the human nature with the divine. The sacrifices themselves were types of the human nature of Christ, for it was that nature which was sacrificed, suffered, and died; the altar on which the sacrifices were offered, was a type of the divine nature of Christ, as it was that which sustained his human nature and gave infinite value to his sacrifice. Now the fire on the Jewish altar of burnt-offering was to be kept ever burning; and this was to show that it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin, and therefore to teach the people, under that dispensation, to look to the atoning blood of the Messiah, as that only which could quench the flame of divine wrath against sin, and be an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour, in which he might eternally rest. Thus the Jews were taught that God is a consuming fire, one who will by no means clear the guilty without a satisfaction of his justice. But that satisfaction has been made. The fire of divine wrath, in the case of every believer, is now quenched by the blood of Christ. His blood satisfies justice and cleanses from sin. This he did once when he offered up himself. Heb. vii. 27. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. x. 10-17. Believe in him, that you may be saved!

“His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me!”

Types and Shadows.

Thus we find three sacred things in the outer court, the laver, the sacrifices, and the altar on which they were offered. Now if we enter the first part of the tabernacle, or temple, we shall find three sacred things there also. One was the golden candlestick, which taught that all true spiritual light is conveyed unto the church only from Christ; and that, as the branches were supplied with oil from the body of the candlestick, so all the members are supplied out of the fulness of Christ, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. Another was the table of shew-bread, which meant that in Christ, who is the bread of life, there is food continually for starving sinners, and that we can never come amiss, at any time, to him for supply, because in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The other was the altar of incense, and the incense which was continually burnt upon this altar, every morning and evening, (after the sacrifices were offered without upon the altar of burnt-offering,) typified the prevalent intercession of Christ, founded upon his meritorious oblation. He ever liveth to make intercession. Heb. vii. 25.

As to the sacred things of the holy of holies, the Apostle says, The holiest of all had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the

tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubim of glory, shadowing the mercy-seat. Heb. ix. 1-10. As to the golden censer, it was not always in the holy of holies, but remained there only while the high priest continued within the vail, sprinkling the blood of the sin-offering upon the mercy-seat and before it, on the great day of atonement, once a year. The ark of the covenant was a small box or chest, the lid or cover of which was called the mercy-seat. The golden pot that had manna was not put into the ark, but laid up before it, and signified the inexhaustible provision of all the spiritual blessings laid up in Christ for the members of his mystical body, the church. Aaron's rod was also laid up before the ark, and signified the fixed choice that the Father made of Christ to an unchangeable priesthood. The tables of the covenant were the two tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. These were put into the ark to signify that the law, which was broken by the first Adam, was put up as fulfilled in the second Adam, that is, Christ, that there might be no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Rom. viii. 1-4. These tables were called tables of the covenant, and the ark in which they were put was called the ark of the covenant, because the ten commandments, written on these tables, were the matter of the covenant of works made with Adam, as the head of his posterity, and the fulfilment of them, both in point of doing and suffering, was the condition of the

covenant of grace, made with Christ, as the Head and Representative of his spiritual seed; and they were also the basis of the Jewish national covenant made and ratified at Sinai, as may be seen in Ex. xxiv. 3-8, and Heb. ix. 18-22. The lid or covering of the ark was called the mercy-seat, to intimate that God is propitious and merciful to sinners, only through the meritorious satisfaction of Christ. And that the mercy-seat was a covering to the tables of the covenant, taught that the broken law was so honoured and so hid or covered by the glorious Surety, who answered all its demands, both as to precept and penalty, that it could accuse none before God, who had fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them, even Jesus Christ. Over the mercy-seat were the cherubim, to represent the ministry and service of the holy angels to Christ and his church. They looked one to another and toward the mercy-seat; and their looking one to another signified their perfect harmony in serving the interests of Christ's kingdom; and their looking toward the mercy-seat signified their desire to dive with the most profound veneration and wonder into the adorable mystery of redeeming love: these things the angels desire to look into.

Now into the holy of holies, none might enter but the high priest alone, without any to attend or assist him—and that after the most solemn sacrifices—Ex. xxx. 10; Lev. xvi. 1-34; Heb. ix. 7-25; and herein he was an eminent type of Christ, who had the whole

work of redemption laid upon his shoulder, and of the people there was none with him. And even the high priest might enter only once every year, that is, on the great day of atonement, a solemn anniversary fast under the law. And when he entered, he was expressly required to carry along with him the blood of the sacrifice, slain without the tabernacle, at the altar of burnt-offering, and the golden censer full of burning incense; without both of which he might by no means enter within the most holy place. And this not only showed the necessity of an atonement, but also typified the perpetual efficacy of the blood of Christ in heaven for all the blessings and benefits for which it was shed on earth. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Heb. ix. 24-26; vii. 19-28.

Great Things Significant.

Such are some of the great things of the ceremonial law which God wrote to Israel. What added to their greatness and rendered them significant and important, was their constant reference to the great things of the gospel. Gal. iii. 8; Heb. iv. 2. Yet the Jews counted them as a strange thing, forsook them, despised them, and gave themselves up to the service of idols. God's anger was kindled against them, and he sent their enemies upon them for their chastisement. And when Jesus Christ, the promised

Messiah, the substance of all these shadows, came, his own received him not ; they rejected and crucified their Redeemer, and invoked upon themselves and their children the vengeance of his blood. And it came—terrible in its fury—the nation was scattered, and for these 1800 years the anger of God has burned against them because they counted the great things of the law a strange thing. The law should have prepared them for the coming of Christ ; but when he came, everything about him, and everything he said and did, either was strange to them, or they made strange of it. They knew not the things which were for their peace, and they were hid from their eyes ! O unhappy people ! So indebted to God, and yet so ungrateful ! Having the way of life so clearly pointed out, yet perishing in their sins ! What a solemn warning to all who read their history or hear their mournful story ! He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses : of how much sorcer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace ? Heb. x. 26-29.

Written to us.

But, reader, has God written nothing to us ? Has he not written to us the great things of his law, taking the word law in its widest sense, as including the whole of divine revelation ? Has he not given

to us his word, revealed to us his will? And are there not great things here, things great and wonderful? And shall we make strange of them, or make ourselves strangers to them? Is this wise? Is it safe? Does it not become us to study these great things and become familiar with them? We are taught that we are sinners; that there is an atonement for sin, sufficient, and freely offered to us; that we must be justified by faith in Christ, sanctified by the Spirit, and adopted into the family of God; that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, and eternal rewards and punishments. These great things and others God has written to us, and if we count them as a strange thing, and seek not an interest in Jesus Christ, we shall be cast off as were the Jews, yea, we shall perish for ever! Come, then, to the Lord Jesus! In him see fulfilled all the great things of the law, in him put your trust, and on his sacrifice rely for acceptance with God and for eternal life! For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 1 Cor. v. 6-8.

Hymns.

“And see, the blest Redeemer comes,
The eternal Son appears,
And at the appointed time assumes
The body God prepares.

“ His Father’s honour touched his heart,
 He pitied sinners’ cries,
 And to fulfil a Saviour’s part,
 Was made a sacrifice.

“ No blood of beasts on altars shed
 Could wash the conscience clean ;
 But the rich sacrifice he paid,
 Atones for all our sin.”

“ Once, in the circuit of a year,
 With blood, but not his own,
 Aaron within the veil appears,
 Before the golden throne.

“ But Christ, by his own powerful blood,
 Ascends above the skies ;
 And, in the presence of our God,
 Shows his own sacrifice.”

“ Dost thou look back upon a life of sinning ?
 Forward, and tremble for thy future lot ?
 There’s One who sees the end from the beginning,
 Thy tear of penitence is unforget.
 God knows it all !

“ Then go to God ! Pour out your heart before him !
 There is no grief your Father cannot feel.
 And let your grateful songs of praise adore him—
 To save, forgive, and every wound to heal.
 God knows it all—God knows it all !”

III.

FORGIVENESS WITH GOD.

If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.—Ps. cxxx. 3, 4.

Explanations.

JOB puts an important question when he asks, How should man be just with God? And Micah adds to its interest and importance when he says, Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rains, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? But how can these justify us before God? The question remains, How can sinners be accounted just? How be treated as innocent? If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But—and here is our hope—there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. There is forgiveness, because Christ our passover is sacrificed for us and the great things of the law are fulfilled in him; yea, he has

answered the demands of the law for us, and hence we may be just in him.

To mark iniquities is to keep a strict account of them and to reckon with the transgressor for them according to God's holy law and on the principles of strict justice; to reckon with the transgressor himself, and not with a surety or substitute. Should God thus mark iniquities, who, among the sons of men, could stand? "If thou shouldest mark iniquities, that is, so consider and observe them as to reserve them for punishment and vengeance. * * * * In God's marking sin according to the tenor of the law, the case is the same with all classes of sinners. * * * * In a sin-perplexed soul, God's marking sin according to the tenor of the law, fills the soul with dread and terror. * * * * The marking here intended, implies animadversion, and punishment according to the tenor of the law. Not only the sentence of the law, but a will of punishing according to it, is included in it. If, saith the Psalmist, thou, the great and dreadful God, who art extolled by thy glorious name JAH, shouldest take notice of iniquities, so as to recompense sinners that come unto thee according to the severity of thy holy law, what then? It is answered by the proposal, Who can stand? that is, none can stand. No man, not one in the world, can stand or abide the trial. Every one, on this supposition, must perish, and that eternally. * * * * Who can stand? There is a deep insinuation of a dreadful ruin, as to

all with whom God shall so deal as to mark their iniquities.—Ps. i. 5.”

Who can stand?

Who can stand? To stand is to be justified, or acquitted. The question of the Psalmist implies that if God were to reckon with men, according to law, on the ground of merit or demerit, none could stand the trial and be justified or acquitted. All would be found guilty and be condemned. But he proceeds to say, There is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared, implying that there is a method of reckoning with God, by which it is possible for those who avail themselves of it, to stand, be acquitted, and justified—possible for God to be just, and yet justify them that believe. “To stand, is to stand one’s ground, maintain one’s innocence, and perhaps in this case, to endure one’s sentence. * * * * * Since none can stand, our only hope is in free forgiveness—the forgiveness that we need, the only forgiveness that is available or attainable.” “There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. To fear the Lord is an expression comprehensive of his whole worship and all our duty. To this I am encouraged, saith the Psalmist, in my depths, because there is forgiveness with thee. I will abide in all duties, in all the ways of thy worship, wherein thou mayest be found.” “Fear or godly reverence is represented as one fruit and evidence of pardoned sin.”

What is here Taught.

Some profitable lessons are here taught us. Among them are these. No one can stand acquitted, or be accepted as just, on the ground of his own merit or performances, when God reckoneth with him ; hence all need forgiveness ; there is forgiveness with God ; and God should be feared, he should be reverenced and served with filial affection, because there is forgiveness with him. These lessons we should remember, on them we should meditate.

The First Lesson.

The first lesson to be learned by us from the words of the Psalmist is, that no one can stand acquitted by the law of God, or be accepted and justified on the ground of his own merit or performances, when God reckoneth with him. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand ? Not one !

What the Scriptures Teach.

Not one ! So the Scriptures teach. Thus Job says, If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. What then shall I do when God riseth up ? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ? Isaiah says, speaking as well of man's moral disease as of the corruption and misery of the Jewish state, The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it ; but wounds,

and bruises, and putrifying sores; they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. And Paul, in Romans, quoting from several scriptures, says, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Rom. iii. 9-20. None can stand. Not one!

What Men Confess.

No, not one! So the best men confess. Says Job, I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Moses, under a deep sense of his unworthiness, exclaims, Behold, I am of uncircumcised lips. And Isaiah, when favoured with a heavenly vision, said, Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Paul declares, For I know that in me, that is, in my

flesh, dwelleth no *good* thing: and he exclaims, in view of his unworthiness, O wretched man that I am! The holiest men in all ages have been most sensible of their depravity. They have had the clearest views of the desperate wickedness of their own hearts, and the entire demerit of their whole lives. The nearer the saints have approximated the moral image of their Maker, the more conscious have they been of their moral deformity; the nearer they have advanced towards perfection, the more sensible have they been of their imperfections. Like Paul, they have esteemed themselves less than the least of all saints; renounced all self-dependence, and relinquished for ever all hope of justification on the ground of their own merit or performances. They see nothing in themselves for which they can hope for divine acceptance. With David they exclaim, If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Not one!

Reason.

No; not one! Reason corroborates and confirms the Scripture and the confessions of the best men. The light of nature teaches us something of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God. Reason infers that a being possessed of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, would not leave his works imperfect; he would not create a world filled, as this is, with natural and moral evil; natural and moral evil would have, originally, no place in the works of a

Being possessing infinite wisdom, goodness, and power. These perfections God evidently possesses, if at all, in an infinite degree. Of course, all the works issuing from his hands must be very good. But how do we see them now? Both natural and moral evil abound. Man, the master-piece of divine workmanship, is subject to evils numberless and unspeakable. And why? Because he is not as God made him! Reason, as well as revelation, teaches us that man is fallen! He is not as he once was: he is a sinner; he is fallen! And I ask, how can a fallen being, as man evidently is, stand acquitted, on the ground of his own performances, when God reckoneth with him? The very fact that he is fallen and depraved, precludes the idea of justification on the score of merit. If fallen, as experience, and observation, and Scripture, and reason prove, he is destitute of merit; he has nothing but his sinfulness and misery to commend him to God, and cannot stand when God marks iniquity against him, and deals with him according to the tenor of his law. That law demands constant, perpetual, and perfect obedience. A single failure exposes to its curse. No subsequent obedience can atone for a single past transgression; and as all have transgressed, all are condemned; and who then can stand? Not one!

The Second Lesson.

No; not one! Hence all need forgiveness. This follows, of course. If all are sinners and condemned;

if no one can stand acquitted by the law of God, on the ground of his own merit or works, when God reckoneth with him; then, of course, all need pardon. There must be some way of forgiveness devised, some way of justification other than by works, or all are lost! Every one!

The Bible.

All must be lost! Every one! So the Scriptures teach. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: of course, all need pardon and justification, and without it, they must perish. And if they cannot be pardoned and justified on the ground of works, how can this be accomplished? How can they be forgiven? The following verses teach us: All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely—not by works, not by anything done by us, nor for anything done in us—freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth, or fore-ordained, as the margin reads, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. How much stress is, in the Scriptures, laid upon the forgiveness of sins as essential to the peace and happiness of man! It is essential to his peace with God and to peace in his own heart. It is necessary to

his life as well as to his peace. He needs forgiveness that he may glorify God and enjoy him, that he may be happy and useful, that he may have hope, peace, and joy. Thus is it written, There is no peace to the wicked; and, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. And how frequently is forgiveness promised as an unspeakable blessing! Thus,—I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee. Thus what man needs is the richest blessing which God can bestow, for it includes, or brings with it, all others; and without the blessing of forgiveness, he is and must be miserable, for he is a sinner, and sin is the parent of misery. All need forgiveness; all, every one!

Confessions.

Yes, all need forgiveness; all, every one! All men confess their need of pardon. So general is the consciousness of guilt and ill-desert, and the expression, in some way, of the desire of forgiveness, that it may be termed an universal sentiment. It is almost as widely diffused as is the human race. All men, with few and rare exceptions, are sensible of their fallen condition; all desire pardon; and in some

way, all confess their need of forgiveness. The sacrifices and penances, the self-inflicted tortures and self-immolations of the heathen, are but so many confessions directly in point. The same may be said of Catholic rites and Mohammedan superstitions. And many of the religious forms and external moralities and generous acts of nominal Christendom spring from the same source. And the cry of the penitent is for mercy and pardon. The publican prayed, God be merciful to me a sinner! Every prayer is a confession of guilt, and a plea for the remission of sins. The Saviour himself has taught us to pray, Father, forgive us our debts—our sins—as we forgive our debtors. The holiest pray for pardon; they ask for forgiveness; they plead not their merits before God, for they have none to plead; they say, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. All being sinners, all need forgiveness. If the best men confess their need of forgiveness, the awakened sinner feels it with oppressive weight. He is convinced of his sins by the Spirit of God, and cries, O wretched man that I am! He is burdened with a sense of his unworthiness, and cries, What must I do to be saved? Can I be forgiven? How can this burden be taken from my heart? Is there forgiveness with God? Is there forgiveness for me?

Yes, all need forgiveness, many confess it, but

few feel it as they should. It is not until convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit of God that men truly feel their need of being forgiven. But when the Spirit brings the truth home to their hearts and convinces them of their sin and misery, then they begin to feel as before they never felt, that they must be forgiven or perish. Sin then appears an infinite evil. Good deeds they have none. They blush to think of merit. Sin is their burden. They loathe and abhor themselves on account of sin; and they feel and confess that it would be just in God to leave them to perish for ever—to mark their iniquities and condemn them to eternal death. They cannot stand before him. Their sins are not only their burden, but their grief and their abhorrence; and crushed beneath the mighty load, sad, sorrowful, repenting, they cry, What must we do? How can we be forgiven? How delivered from sin? Is there forgiveness with God? Thus a sense of sin prepared Adam for the promise of the woman's seed: and a sense of sin prepares men for the announcement of mercy through Jesus Christ. Not till we feel lost by sin are we ready to be saved by faith in the Son of God.

The Third Lesson.

But whether we feel it or not, we are sinners, and need forgiveness. Then is there forgiveness? What question can be more important for us as sinners? Is there forgiveness? Yes, there is forgiveness with

God. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee.

Forgiveness with God.

Forgiveness with God! This is a glorious truth! Nothing of this is known from the light of nature. The volume of nature, with all its vastness, sublimity, and beauty, speaks not a word of forgiveness. It speaks of the depravity of man, but leaves us all in darkness respecting a way of recovery from sin and ruin. It teaches us the need of forgiveness; it teaches the impossibility of acquittal on the ground of works or merit; but in all its contents, it has not a line like this, **THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH GOD!** The Scriptures alone contain this blessed intimation; and it is an intimation so far above the teachings of reason, that it would scarcely be creditable if the Bible did not reveal it. We should bless God for this truth, so intimately connected with our necessities as sinners; and if for no other reason, we should love the Bible because it says there is forgiveness with God. Hence it is that the awakened begin to search the Scriptures as soon as they begin to pray and to ask for the way of life. The Bible alone can solve their doubts and relieve their perplexities; and it can do this because it alone reveals the way of salvation—forgiveness with God!

The light of nature does not, but the Bible does, reveal the glorious and astonishing truth, that there is forgiveness with God—forgiveness even for the

chief of sinners—forgiveness with him that he may be feared, and plenteous redemption that he may be sought unto. It sets Jehovah before us as the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth ; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, without a satisfaction to his justice, or if they continue impenitent and unbelieving, for he is just. And yet the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever. And says Daniel, To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have sinned against him. There is forgiveness with God.

The Way of Forgiveness.

Forgiveness ! But it would be of comparatively little moment for us to know that there is forgiveness with God, if we were left in ignorance of the way in which the benefit may be secured. Let the mariner on the stormy deep be informed that there is safety in port, and what would that avail him, had he no compass by which to direct his tempest-tossed bark into the desired haven ? Tell the burdened sinner there is forgiveness with God, and what will that avail, if you tell him not how he may approach Jehovah acceptably and find pardon and peace ? The Bible does not leave us in darkness here. Light shines from the sacred page on the sinner's pathway, directing him to the cross of Christ. The Bible points out the way of forgive-

ness. It tells us how iniquities may be blotted out, and the sinner stand acquitted and justified and accepted and saved. Its teachings here are divine. No other book teaches like this. The reckoning here revealed is *God's own arithmetic*—reckoning with a substitute in the sinner's stead. The method of pardon and salvation here revealed is above human invention; it came from God: he is its Author. This mode of reckoning is all his own. The plan of salvation developed in the Scriptures is so unlike every other, so far transcending human genius, so honouring to God and so abasing to man—so wise, so good, so unique—that the Book which contains it must have been written by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Were there no other argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures, this alone is sufficient to establish their claim to divine inspiration. They came from God.

The Scriptures not only teach us the possibility of forgiveness, they also point out the way. It is by faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ our passover, the Lamb slain. They reveal a peculiar method of reckoning—God's method—reckoning with a Surety or Substitute, marking the iniquities of the sinner against the Substitute, or placing them to his account, he bearing the penalty, and the sinner being acquitted, forgiven, justified, and accepted, on the exercise of faith in him. The Surety paying the debt by the sacrifice of himself; and all who by faith avail themselves of the sacrifice thus made are

forgiven. The Surety makes atonement and pays the debt, and all who believe in him, are, on the exercise of faith—their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour—acquitted and stand justified before God. So that, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus there is forgiveness with God.

What Christ has done.

But to be more particular. Consider what has been done to open the way for the forgiveness of sins and to secure this blessing to all them that believe. Jesus Christ took the sinner's place, his law-place, and was made a curse for him; he suffered for him and in his stead, and thus atoned for his sins. By his obedience, sufferings, and death, he has made an atonement for his sins, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for his justification; and now ascended, he ever liveth to intercede. Thus it is written, Christ suffered for us. He died for the ungodly. He was made a curse for us; who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree. He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. On him was laid the iniquity of us all. He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us, a sin-offering—the bearer of our sins—that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He is the propitiation for our sins. He is offered to men in the gospel as their Saviour. When they believe—receive and rest upon him—they are forgiven and

accounted righteous. They are not only acquitted and forgiven, but they are treated as innocent, as if the righteousness of Christ were theirs. This is the way God forgives; thus there is forgiveness with God. Christ has died; and the sinner has but to believe in Jesus Christ, and he is forgiven, justified, saved:—and to believe in Christ is to credit the testimony of God concerning him and to receive and rest upon him alone for salvation; it is to trust in Christ for pardon and eternal life. Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Rom. iii. 21–28.

How God Forgives.

We should ever remember that God forgives only through Jesus Christ. It is because of his atonement, because he is the propitiation for our sins, that God can be just and yet justify him which believeth in Jesus. Hence it is that forgiveness is so frequently spoken of in connection with the name, office, and work of Christ the Mediator, and the shedding of his blood. Repentance and remission of sins are preached in his name. Luke xxiv. 47. There is salvation in no other. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sin. Acts v. 31. Through him is preached

the forgiveness of sins. Acts xiii. 38. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. His blood cleanseth from all sin; and without shedding of blood is no remission. Hence the atoning blood of Christ is the only ground of hope. There is forgiveness with God, but it is only through Jesus Christ, and because he has died and now lives. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by him. Reject him, and there is no pardon, no hope. Reject him, and you are lost. Receive him, and you are safe. Receive him, and pardon and eternal life are yours. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish!

“ His is the name that calms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
’Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
’Tis life, and health, and peace.”

Yea, he is our peace, having destroyed the enmity by the blood of his cross, and reconciled us to God by his death.

Invitations and Entreaties.

Burdened sinner, Jesus has died! He says to you, Come unto me! Go to him with a broken and contrite heart. Receive him. Give yourself to him, saying:

“ Here, Lord, I give myself away,
’Tis all that I can do!”

And this is all he requires. This is the way to peace,

the way of salvation. Believe in Jesus; cast your burden on him, and you shall be forgiven and saved. Convinced of your sins and penitent, go to Jesus Christ, give yourself to him, and then live to his glory. This is the evidence you are to give that you do truly close in with the offered mercy—a life of obedience to Jesus Christ. Believing in him is the way of life; obeying him is the evidence you are to give to the world that you do believe. As a believing sinner, you shall be forgiven; as a forgiven sinner, you must fear God and keep his commandments, for there is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared, feared reverently and obediently, for that fear which is the offspring of the hope of pardon, is the bosom companion of love to God and man.

Forgiveness! Then there is hope! Burdened, weary, and heavy-laden sinner, look up! Behold the Lamb of God! He came to take away your sins; he can give you rest. Believe in him, and you shall have peace. How many have found him precious to their souls! They have come to him in their distress, and have gone on their way rejoicing. They have found there is forgiveness with God, and they have cried with the spirit of children, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth! Yes, there is forgiveness with God through Jesus Christ; and if you feel your sins to be a burden, you may hope in his mercy.

The Fourth Lesson.

There is further instruction here. We are also

taught the design and result of the scheme of mercy which infinite wisdom and goodness devised for the pardon and restoration of fallen man: there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared—to the intent thou mayest be feared, for this very purpose. If there were no hope of forgiveness, there could be no pity in this world, there could be no genuine repentance, no filial obedience, no reverential worship of God. All would be blank despair, hardened sinfulness and bitter remorse. Earth would be hell! There is forgiveness, that there may be pity, reverence, love, obedience. God should be feared—feared in every proper sense—because there is forgiveness with him. But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

God Revealed.

Forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared—feared, because the plan of redemption reveals to us the greatness and glory of the divine character. God is infinite in wisdom, or he could never have devised such a plan. Well is Jesus Christ called the wisdom of God; the plan of salvation through him is a wonderful display of divine wisdom. This scheme originated with one who is all-wise. It is the offspring of Jehovah's counsels. Here is wisdom. And God is infinite in goodness and mercy, or he would never have devised such a plan. What love is here! what pity! what mercy! what goodness! And see what justice is here displayed also! See how Christ suf-

fered that man might be forgiven! If herein is love, so herein is justice too! Had not God been just, he would not have devised such a plan for the pardon of man and the honour of his throne—his throne honoured and his law maintained, while man is forgiven! And had he not been infinite in power and resources—able to control all things—he could not have executed the plan. Earth and hell conspired against its execution; and how many things were necessary to bring about its accomplishment! How many things must meet, or be overruled and directed, to secure the accomplishment of the divine purposes in the death of Christ by the voluntary agency of sinful men! Yet all this was accomplished, just when, and where, and how, God has determined and the prophets declared. In the conception and completion of the plan of redemption, what a wonderful display is made of the divine perfections! What glory is here seen to invest the character of God! What a revelation is here made of him! This is the Being with whom there is forgiveness; this is the way in which he has rendered it possible for him to forgive; this plan acquaints us more perfectly with the fearful as well as the lovely perfections of his character; and because of this revelation thus made of God—because of this clearer view which the plan of redemption gives of the divine attributes—his name should be feared—be regarded with reverence, veneration, awe, gratitude and love. There is forgiveness with him, that he may be feared. This plan of

mercy has been devised and executed that man may be forgiven, and that, by the brilliant displays it should make of the perfections of God, all men might be constrained to fear his great and holy name—that men may know God, and knowing, fear, love, and serve him. The glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ, in the way of salvation through him. It reveals God to us; and reveals him that we may fear him. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. His fear is piety.

Reverential Fear.

That thou mayest be feared—feared with reverential fear. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. We should approach him with holy awe. We should reverence his holy name because he forgives, and fear to offend him; so fear as to adore, so reverence as to love and obey.

Filial Fear.

That thou mayest be feared—feared with filial fear. When we are forgiven, we become his children; we are adopted into his family; we become the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Hence we should fear him as our Father; we should have the fear of children; fear that constrains to love and obey; fear that keeps us near his feet; fear that flies from temptation, and gives us the victory over sin. A right view of the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, and a cordial embracing of

that plan and of Christ by faith, will beget this fear within us, and bring us wholly in subjection to the divine will and requirements.

Fear of Wrath.

That thou mayest be feared—feared because of the manner in which he forgives. He forgives through Christ. And that he might forgive, Christ died. Now, if he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up to an ignominious death, rather than forgive the sinner without a satisfaction to his justice, will he spare the sinner who refuses to embrace Jesus Christ, and avail himself of the forgiveness of sins through him? Most surely he will not. There is danger. There is wrath to come! The impenitent and unbelieving sinner, therefore, has reason to fear; he has reason to fear coming wrath. Look on the agonies of Christ; see there the justice of God, and fear and tremble! The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power? 2 Thess. i. 7-9.

Fear a Motive.

There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared—so feared as to avail ourselves of the way of forgiveness provided for us and offered to us. We are

guilty, by nature the children of wrath; the law of God condemns us; we are exposed to its curse; in danger of perishing. The sufferings of Jesus teach us that we can expect no mercy out of Christ. If Jesus Christ is not made to us the end of the law for righteousness, we must ourselves endure the curse—the wrath of God for ever. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. From this fearful thing we should escape. We should flee from the wrath to come. We should so fear God, the sin-avenger, as to seek his forgiveness in the name and for the sake of Christ—forgiveness through atoning blood. If hope will not draw us to the cross, fear should drive us there. It should operate as a motive to seek the salvation of our souls—a motive to seek forgiveness.

Fear of Delay.

That thou mayest be feared—feared, lest the day of hope and mercy pass for ever, and leave us in our sins, unpardoned, without God, and without hope in the world. To die unforgiven is to perish. Though there is forgiveness with God, there is a point beyond which his forbearance does not extend.

“For goodness knows the appointed bound,
And turns to vengeance there.”

Now there is forgiveness. Now pardon may be secured; we should fear lest we neglect to apply for it till it is too late. Let the application be made

without delay, that you may receive the remission of sins. Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation. To-morrow it may be too late!

Fear and Obedience.

That thou mayest be feared—feared, so as to obey him and live to his glory. The remembrance of the price of our redemption and of what God has done for us, should constrain us to live, not to ourselves, but to the glory of God. Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price. Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. God is to be reverenced and served with filial affection; and to this we should be constrained by what he has done for us. If we are forgiven, we must live to him who has forgiven us. We must so fear as to obey.

Fear our whole Duty.

Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. Forgiveness; then there is hope, and then there may be love, gratitude, service, worship. If there were no hope of forgiveness, there could be no escape from despair; and in their desperation, men would have no fear of God before their eyes. Of course, there could be no pity in the world. Man would

have duties, but his duties would not be done; he would be under obligations, but obligations would be disregarded. The hope of forgiveness through Jesus Christ, therefore, is the basis of all that is morally excellent among men. It is the mainspring of human virtue—the light that gilds our path as we journey toward heaven; it casts its genial rays over this dark and benighted world, and illuminates the pathway of man as he journeys to the tomb. It is the foster-parent of holy love. And now, that there is forgiveness with God, man may hope, and God may be loved as well as feared; yea, he may be loved because feared, for this fear includes love. It is the whole of piety—our whole duty. That fear which is the offspring of the hope of pardon, is the bosom companion of love to God and man. We love him whom we fear; we worship and adore him; we delight in serving and pleasing him; we live to his glory. Having our sins forgiven, and being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, we serve him with holy fear and ardent love and constant zeal. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Eccl. xii. 1, 13, 14.

Adoration.

Let saints adore! There is a way of pardon; a way which places the divine perfections in the clear-

est light, brings a rich revenue of praise and glory to God, while it teaches man his insignificance, his worthlessness, his vileness, and his helplessness; a way which glorifies God and abases man—honours the law while it saves the transgressor. In this way Christians have been led. They have felt their sinfulness, their corruption, vileness and exposure; they have said with the Psalmist when overwhelmed with conviction, shame and confusion, If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? They have felt themselves guilty, vile, undone, ruined, and lost; and they then inquired what they must do, how they could be delivered from sin and wrath, and have peace with God. Alarmed, despairing, they were pointed to the Lamb of God, the door of hope was opened, they saw in the cross of Christ that there is forgiveness with God; they believed and were forgiven. A new song was put into their mouths, even praise to our God; and now they sing redeeming love. Let them adore Him who devised the plan of redemption; let them adore him who died to redeem them; let them adore that grace which took their feet out of the horrible pit and miry clay; and while they adore, let them consecrate themselves anew to the service of God, and do what they can to communicate to others the glad tidings of salvation. Speedily may all hear of Jesus; speedily may all hear of forgiveness in his name! What book reveals the way of life? To what book is the Christian indebted for his immortal hopes? The Bible. And

does he deserve the name of Christian who does not exert himself to give the Bible to the destitute, to give the Bible to the world? Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Fear and Tremble.

While saints adore, let sinners fear and tremble. There is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared—that man may have pity toward him and live in his fear—and if they refuse, they should tremble at his wrath. The sinner should fear and tremble for the reasons which have been named, and for others. Reader—if yet in your sins—you should fear and tremble because you have lived so long without securing the forgiveness of your sins. You are a sinner. You need forgiveness. You can never stand acquitted before God on the ground of merit. You can stand only in Christ. He is offered to you freely. You are invited to come to him. Long and often have you been invited; and as long and often have you refused. You would not come; and still you will not! The Spirit has striven, but you have resisted; and still you resist! You are yet in your sins; yet without hope! And the fact that you have lived so long in the midst of gospel light, so long under religious appliances, so long in the neglect of duty, while conscience has admonished you as it seems in vain; lived so long

rejecting Christ and grieving the Spirit, should alarm you, and cause you to fear and tremble! Danger is near! Death is coming! You have treasured up a vast amount of guilt, and you are constantly provoking God to leave you for ever to hardness of heart and blindness of mind—leave you to live and die in your sins! And you should fear and tremble because God is just. He will one day pour his fury upon you unless you avail yourself of that salvation which Jesus Christ has purchased with his blood. He will not spare the impenitent and unbelieving. The wicked shall be turned into hell. O sinner, fear, and tremble, and repent!

Universalism.

Universalism is false. There is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared. They who fear not God are not forgiven; and they who are not forgiven cannot be saved. Salvation begins here on earth in the forgiveness of sins; and where forgiveness is not, as it is not where there is no fear of God, there sin remains, there wrath remains, and there must be eternal death, everlasting punishment. All are not saved, for all are not forgiven; and so universalism cannot be true. It is a fatal delusion, a doctrine of the devil. Shun it as the way to death!

Seek Forgiveness.

Then seek the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. Through him there is forgiveness with

God. He came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. He died to save. He arose and ascended. He lives. He is able to save to the uttermost. He that cometh shall in no wise be cast out. Why not come? The object of our ministry and of these pages is to persuade men to come to Christ, to persuade them to seek forgiveness, to persuade them to be saved. One would think it no difficult matter to persuade men to attend to these things. But, alas, they are disposed to attend to anything and everything else but these. They will risk health and life to acquire wealth; risk health, and life, and property, to indulge their carnal propensities and enjoy pleasure; but they can scarcely be persuaded to give a passing thought to the soul, to the atoning sacrifice of Christ, to heaven and hell! They have Moses and the prophets, Christ and the evangelists, the written word and the living preacher, the printed page and the voice of friendship, the conviction of conscience and the strivings of the Spirit; and yet they will not believe! They would not be persuaded though one should rise from the dead! One has risen, Christ Jesus, and ascended; and yet they believe not! They will live on in their sins till death overtakes them, and they in hell lift up their eyes in torment! In the latter day ye shall consider it perfectly! How much better to consider now, and turn and live! Thus saith the Lord, consider your ways! Reader, pause, and consider your ways! Flee to Christ!

Begin at once to seek the forgiveness of your sins!

Hymns.

“Lord, I am vile, conceived in sin,
 And born unholv and unclean;
 Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
 Corrupts the race, and taints us all.
 Behold, I fall before thy face;
 My only refuge is thy grace:
 No outward forms can make me clean;
 The leprosy lies deep within.
 No bleeding bird, nor bleeding beast,
 Nor hyssop-branch, nor sprinkling priest,
 Nor running brook, nor flood, nor sea,
 Can wash the dismal stain away.
 Jesus, my God, thy blood alone
 Hath power sufficient to atone;
 Thy blood can make me white as snow;
 No Jewish types could cleanse me so.”

“O God of mercy, hear my call,
 My load of guilt remove;
 Break down this separating wall,
 That bars me from thy love.

“No blood of goats nor heifers slain,
 For sin could e'er atone;
 The death of Christ shall still remain
 Sufficient and alone.

“A soul oppressed with sin's desert
 My God will ne'er despise;
 An humble groan, a broken heart,
 Is our best sacrifice.”

“Great God, should thy severer eye,
And thine impartial hand,
Mark and revenge iniquity,
No mortal flesh could stand.

“But there are pardons with my God,
For crimes of high degree ;
Thy Son hath bought them with his blood,
To draw us near to thee.

“I wait for thy salvation, Lord,
With strong desires I wait ;
My soul, invited by thy word,
Stands watching at thy gate.”

“From deep distress and troubled thoughts,
To thee, my God, I raised my cries ;
If thou severely mark our faults,
No flesh can stand before thine eyes.

“But thou hast built thy throne of grace,
Free to dispense thy pardons there,
That sinners may approach thy face,
And hope, and love, as well as fear.”

IV.

WHY HALT YE?

How long halt ye between two opinions?—1 Kings xviii. 21.

The Question.

CHRIST our passover is sacrificed for us. The great things of the law are fulfilled in him. Through him there is forgiveness with God. In his name salvation is offered to us. We are invited to come to him for life. We are urged to flee from the wrath to come. Life and death are set before us; and it may be asked, Why halt ye? Why hesitate? How long halt ye between two opinions? 1 Kings xviii. 21.

These words, together with the history connected with them, have often been the theme of remark. On the history I need not offer any comments; you may read it for yourself. The question here proposed should come home to your heart. It is addressed to you; and it suggests for your serious consideration the unreasonableness and danger of indecision in religion. The prophet addresses the people as undecided and hesitating, and so you are addressed. And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions?

Be decided. If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. Why hesitate and waver? Your indecision is unreasonable and dangerous. Why longer indulge in it, and how long? How long halt ye between two opinions?

The same question may now with propriety be put. There are multitudes who seem undecided on the subject of greatest moment. They always intend to become pious; they never intend to delay religion till it is too late; they design not to defer repentance till death comes; but they are not ready to decide yet; they are not ready to take up the subject now; they are not at ease, because undecided, and they feel unsafe. Conscience troubles them, because they are neglecting duty, and they have their fears of coming wrath. At times they are almost persuaded to become Christians; they know they ought to come to Christ, but they come not. To such I say, Why halt ye? How long halt ye between two opinions? Your indecision is unreasonable and dangerous.

Indecision is Unreasonable.

Decision of character is of priceless value. It is important at all times. Especially is it important in all great matters to be decided; how unspeakably important, then, in this! Indecision is unreasonable in proportion to the vastness of the interests at stake. Here everything is at stake; eternal bliss or woe depends upon our being decided! How unreasonable

then to halt and hesitate—to halt and hesitate where eternal consequences are pending! This will appear more clearly from what follows, for there are many reasons why indecision is unreasonable. Then why halt ye?

Decision not Difficult.

Indecision in religion is unreasonable because the case is not a difficult one to decide. If the matter were a very difficult one, there could be no great unreasonableness in halting, at least for a time, between the two opinions. There would be no unreasonableness in halting unless it were continued for a longer period than might be requisite for an intelligent investigation and decision. But there is no very great difficulty here; the matter is perfectly plain; a decision is easy. The objects or ultimate ends presented by the two opinions, religion and irreligion, are so diverse in their nature, that the mind need not hesitate a moment between them. On the one side is Christ, on the other Satan; on the one side is heaven, on the other hell; here is happiness, there is misery; here is honour, there is infamy. How long need you halt between bliss and woe? How long between heaven and hell? or between Christ and the Devil? When the opinions, or the objects which they present to your mind, are so different, where is the need of hesitation? In a case so plain, how unreasonable is indecision? Why halt ye?

Sufficient Evidence.

Indecision is unreasonable because there is sufficient evidence to command assent. If there were not much evidence in favour of Christianity and a life conformed to it, or if the evidence for and against were pretty equally balanced, there might be some pretence for halting and delay. But there is abundance of evidence, and this evidence is almost entirely all on one side. There is so much more evidence for Christianity than against it, so much more in favour of a life of piety than there is in favour of a life of irreligion, that there is no excuse for hesitation. Indeed so overwhelming is the evidence in favour of religion, that the irreligious themselves acknowledge its worth; and they intend some day to become themselves the followers of Christ. But the time is not yet come. They yet are halting. In view of the evidence in the case, their course is unreasonable. It is without excuse! Examine this evidence: look at the volumes which have been written in defence of Christianity, at the devoted lives and triumphant deaths of the Lord's true-hearted people; and tell me if indecision is not unreasonable! Go, reader, stand by the grave of some departed saint—of Hannah Hobbie for instance—and tell me if there be not reality and divinity in religion. Her patience in suffering, her triumph in death, her joy and peace, are a demonstration of the truth of Christianity, and they show the unreasonableness of halting between

two opinions. In the words of another, written by her grave,

“Were mine whate'er my wishes claim,
I'd ask no higher boon than this—
Like her's, untarnished be my fame,
Like her's, enraptured be my bliss.”

Sufficient Inducements.

Indecision is unreasonable because there are sufficient inducements to be decided. There are many motives which should at once decide us in favour of Christ and his cause, of God, holiness, and heaven. Did we look no farther than our own enjoyment in this world, we should hesitate no longer. How incompatible is a state of suspense with real enjoyment! Yet while halting between two opinions, we are in a state of suspense. No wonder, therefore, that there is no peace to the wicked. If you would be at peace, choose whom you will serve! Then look into eternity, a heaven of bliss, a hell of woe, and hear the voice of mercy calling you to the cross, and what farther, or weightier, inducements can you have to come to a decision on this most momentous of all subjects? With such inducements to decide, with such motives urging to a proper choice, is not indecision unreasonable? Is it not unwise? I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say. How long halt ye between two opinions? And why halt ye?

God Requires us to Decide.

Indecision is unreasonable because God requires us

to be decided. He says by the prophet, How long halt ye? In a case so plain, why hesitate? You know what is said to the angel of the church of Laodicea, Thou art neither cold nor hot; I will spue thee out of my mouth. Then sayest, I am rich; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. Rev. iii. 14-22. Will you regard the counsel of God? He requires you to be decided in the great concerns of the soul—decided in regard to his service. Has he not a right to command? Is it not your duty to obey? Can you hope to prevail against God? Is it not written, Woe to him that striveth with his Maker? Will you strive with him? Have you an arm like God? Can you thunder with a voice like him? Presumptuous man! Will you oppose your Maker? When God requires you to be decided, is not your indecision unreasonable and wicked?

Never Easier to Decide.

Indecision is unreasonable, because it will never, at any future period, be easier to decide than it is at present. There is no reasonable ground of hope that any difficulties which may now be in the way, will ever be less. On the contrary, they will probably increase, with time, in number and magnitude. The hope that it will be easier to decide at some future day, than it is now, and become pious, is vain, delusive, and ruinous. It is a hope big with disappointment and despair. How unreasonable, then,

to delay! It is as easy now to decide, as it ever will be. The work of repentance is as easy now, faith is as easy, reformation is as easy, and it is as easy to begin a life of prayer and devotion—a life of holy living and benevolent doing. Then why hesitate, and linger, and delay? How long halt ye between two opinions? Why halt ye?

Loss of Time.

Indecision is unreasonable because it occasions a great loss of time. Time is precious; and in regard to the salvation of the soul, not a moment should be lost. By a hesitating and undecided manner in the pursuit of an object, we often lose more time than is necessary for its accomplishment. In worldly matters you know the importance of being decided as to what is to be done next. Then no time is lost in thinking what should be done, and halting and hesitating between this business and that. So in regard to religion. It is important to have the mind made up, and made up right. By a contrary course, halting between two opinions, more time is taken than is requisite for repenting and turning to God. All this time, as to the great end for which time is given, is lost. It is lost to usefulness, lost to enjoyment, and so far from being spent to the glory of God, it is spent in rebellion against him. All the time that you are halting and hesitating and being undecided, convinced that you ought to become pious, but not becoming so, you might be, and you

should be, serving God and doing good to man. But all this time, as to any good purpose, is lost; instead of doing good, you are doing evil; and in view of this great loss of time, I say your indecision is unreasonable. It would be thought so in worldly matters. Were you to manage your temporal concerns as you do your spiritual, not only should your poverty come as one that travelleth, and your want as an armed man, but you would be set down as a maniac, your property would be taken from you, and guardians appointed for the benefit of your children. As to the conduct of men in spiritual matters, there is truth in the scripture which says, The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. Eccl. ix. 3. Their indecision is so unreasonable that it is madness! Reader, are you mad? Why halt ye?

Sacrifice of Enjoyment.

Indecision is unreasonable because it is a great sacrifice of enjoyment. Indecision and suspense are incompatible with true happiness. While you are halting between two opinions you cannot be happy. If you would make happiness your own, you must come to the Lord Jesus Christ and serve him with all your heart. His service is freedom; his service is joy. While staying away from Christ, you rob yourself of the enjoyment which religion gives, and which accompanies a life of well-doing,

and in addition to this robbery, you make yourself an heir of all the misery which a state of suspense and a life of evil-doing can bequeath. You lose all the happiness which religion affords; you gain all the wretchedness which suspense begets, and all the sorrow inseparable from a life of sin. Your indecision, therefore, is at a great sacrifice of enjoyment; and in view of that sacrifice your indecision is unreasonable. You are not required to make that sacrifice. Did God require you to make as great a sacrifice of enjoyment as you are making, you would think it a great thing, and be ready to call him a hard master. But now you can make it in the service of Satan and not complain. God requires you to do that which is for your happiness, your present and eternal good, as well as for his glory. But you will not comply. You pursue a course inseparable from disappointment, vexation, and misery; you halt and hesitate between life and death, heaven and hell; and,

"Like the rough sea, that cannot rest,
 You live devoid of peace—
A thousand stings within y *u* *u* breast,
 Deprive your soul of ease"

Unhappy man, how unreasonable your case! How miserable! What a sacrifice of enjoyment!

A sacrifice of Usefulness.

Your indecision is unreasonable, further, because it is at a great sacrifice of usefulness. It is not al-

ways right to seek our own enjoyment. There may be inglorious ease, and enjoyment which is incompatible with duty. The cross is to be borne even though wearisome to the flesh. Duty must be done however trying. It is always right to aim at usefulness. To be useful, we must be pious; to be useful, we must be holy; and to be extensively and permanently useful in the highest degree, we must be obedient to God and decided in our obedience, prompt and decided in duty. There must be no half way work about it. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel, said the dying Jacob to Reuben, his first-born. Decision of character is essential to the accomplishment of great purposes. If you would do good, you must possess firmness and stability. You must be on the right side of every good cause, and take a decided stand in its favour, not fearing a little trouble, nor a little expense, but determined to surmount difficulties and to make the world feel your influence. But while halting between two opinions, where are you? Not in the right place, not on the right side, and evidently not in a commanding position for being useful. No; all your influence goes on the side of impiety. You are doing harm instead of good! Perishing, and leading others with you to ruin! Should you come out on the Lord's side, you might be useful; you might lead others after you to the cross; you might save souls from death; you might deck your crown of eternal rejoicing with redeemed souls as stars and

gems, brilliant for ever! It is at this sacrifice of usefulness that you remain undecided; and your indecision is unreasonable—unreasonable and without excuse!

The Interests at Stake.

Unreasonable! And look at the interests at stake: the soul and its welfare for time and eternity—your everlasting well-being. And the great question is to be decided in the few fleeting moments of this probationary state; and to be decided once for all; and how long will you, how long can you hesitate? How long halt between two opinions? Is your indecision reasonable? Do you not feel it to be unreasonable? And yet you are, or claim to be, a reasonable creature! God has endowed you with rational faculties; then why act unreasonably? Why pursue a course which is not only unreasonable, but dangerous? For your indecision is dangerous.

It Occasions Delay.

Indecision is dangerous because it occasions delay, and delay is always dangerous. It increases the difficulties in your way in number and magnitude. It strengthens the cords of your sins. It confirms your evil habits. It augments all the evil influences which bind you to earth, and keep you from the cross of Christ. It diminishes the probability of your ever coming to a right decision, and taking that course which will eventuate in your future felicity. It resists and grieves the Holy Ghost,

scars the conscience, blunts the sensibilities, and hardens the heart. Thus your indecision increases the difficulties in the way of your salvation. Your indecision is dangerous.

Abuse of Privileges.

Indecision is dangerous because it is an abuse of your privileges. God gave you your privileges; but he gave them not to be abused; he gave them to be improved. Not to improve is to abuse them: Is halting between two opinions—are hesitation and delay—an improvement of your privileges? Is it not evidently an abuse of them? And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee! And when he was come near to Jerusalem, he beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes! Reader, your abused privileges may be taken away! They may not continue always. God may speedily remove them! And then you may sigh in vain over your lost opportunities, and wish, but idly wish, for their return. It is dangerous to trifle with the blessings and privileges of the gospel. Your indecision is dangerous. Why halt ye?

Health may fail.

It is dangerous because your health may fail. All our vigour should be given to God. The concerns of the soul demand the energies of a sound mind and a sound body. But how precarious is health! In how short a time may it be taken away! Lost, never more to be recovered! And when under the influence of disease, and racked with pain, or faint and languid, you will feel the necessity of the supports of religion; and you will find that such circumstances are not the most favourable for first turning the attention to this momentous concern. How much better to come to Christ while health is granted us, that we may be prepared for sickness when it comes, or for sudden death, should it be appointed unto us! Sickness may come, trials may come, death may come! It is wise to be ready! How long halt ye between two opinions?

Reason may fail.

Indecision is dangerous because reason may fail us. Perhaps you never *intend* to be deranged! You do not contemplate it even as a possibility. But who is it that maintains the balance in the intellectual machinery of your soul? Is it not that Being whose will you disregard? And can he not, in a moment, destroy that balance, and leave you to wander abroad a raving maniac, or to settle down in cheerless idiocy? Can you be deaf to the calls

and warnings of that Being in whose hand your breath is, and on whose mercy you depend, for the healthful exercise of those mental capacities which elevate you above the beasts that perish? Is it wise to do so? Is it safe? Ah, while blest with reason, improve it in seeking the salvation of your soul. Banish your hesitancy; decide for God and heaven! Your reason may fail! Your indecision is dangerous.

Life may end.

It is dangerous because life may terminate before you decide. How long halt ye? You may halt too long—till death comes; and then it is too late! Your destiny then is sealed for ever! Frequently providences speak loudly of the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the importance of being ready, always ready. And yet you hesitate. Are you willing to die as you are? I know you are not. Then why are you willing to live as you are? You can live so but a little while longer, before death will overtake you. Death may come soon; it may come suddenly; how dangerous, then, to be undecided and unprepared! Why halt ye?

The Spirit may Depart.

It is dangerous, because although life may be continued, yet the Spirit of God may leave you for ever. My Spirit, saith God, shall not always strive with man. The Spirit may be grieved away, and take his everlasting flight. You have long and often

grieved and resisted the Holy Ghost. He has convinced you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, pointed to the coming wrath, and urged you from that wrath to flee. You have not yielded to his influences. He has called, but you have refused. Still you are refusing; still fighting against the Spirit of God. Remember, you may resist the Spirit once too often. He may leave you to hardness of heart and blindness of mind! Your present position is full of peril. Your indecision exposes you to the awful danger of being left for ever by the Spirit of God. And if he leaves you, you are lost! Evermore undone! Why halt ye?

Hardening Influence.

Indecision is dangerous because of its hardening influence. It tends to render one more insensible of his guilt and danger, more indifferent to the claims of God, more thoughtless about eternity, more careless about his soul. The longer, therefore, you halt between two opinions, the longer you are likely to halt and hesitate; the longer you remain undecided, the longer you are likely so to remain. Just in proportion to the length of time one has continued undecided, just in that proportion is the probability that he will always continue undecided, and perish in his sins for ever. Beware of indecision; it has a hardening influence on the heart, increases the difficulty of the soul's salvation, and augments the danger of its endless perdition! Why halt ye?

Ruinous Influence.

Indecision is dangerous because of its ruinous influence on others. It has a hardening influence on the individual himself, and through him it has a dangerous influence on others. Your indecision may cause others to be undecided; and thus while you are ruining yourself, you are also bearing others with you down to the gulf of perdition. One coward, fleeing in the hour of conflict, may spread panic and confusion through a whole battalion. You halt between two opinions; others follow your example; your influence is contagious and ruinous. You neither enter the kingdom of heaven yourself, nor permit others to enter. Remember, you are responsible for the souls which perish through your influence! How dangerous, then, your indecision, when it not only ruins your own soul, but plunges others also into eternal darkness and despair! It is enough to ruin yourself, quite enough; but how sad when you perish not alone in your iniquity! Why halt ye?

The Consequences.

And look into the eternal world! See the consequences to yourself and to others of living and dying in a state of suspense, almost a Christian it may be, yet halting between two opinions. Almost persuaded, yet undecided! I will not attempt to describe the consequences. For ever undescribed, let them remain. Let imagination picture them to the

soul; no, imagination can never reach them; let them remain as the word of God has left them: the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever! Hell with all its horrors, and those eternal, is the doom of those who die halting between two opinions—invited to Christ, on the point of turning to him, yet never coming. Will you thus live and die? Why halt ye? Why, say, reader,

“Why will you in the crooked ways
Of sin and folly go?
In pain you travel all your days,
To reap immortal woe.

Unreasonable and Dangerous.

In view of the preceding considerations, I ask, is not indecision in religion most unreasonable and dangerous? Reader, I put this question to your own conscience; and I know the answer which your conscience gives. It says, Indecision is most unreasonable, and dangerous, and wicked. This your conscience says, and you cannot deny it. And when your conscience says this, dear reader, it condemns yourself. It testifies against your indecision; it says, How long halt between two opinions? As yet you have lived without God and without hope. Life and death have been placed before you; the Spirit has striven; the Saviour has invited; you have been urged and entreated to choose the one thing needful, the good part which can never be taken away; but you have resisted all the influences

which have been employed to draw you to Christ, and you are now to-day in the gall of bitterness, in the bonds of iniquity, undecided, wavering, halting between two opinions. And I know, and you know, and God knows, that your position is unreasonable and dangerous. You ought at once to abandon that position, and flee to Jesus Christ, the ark of safety. Will you do it? or, will you continue where you are, and perish? Will you turn and live? or, refuse and die?

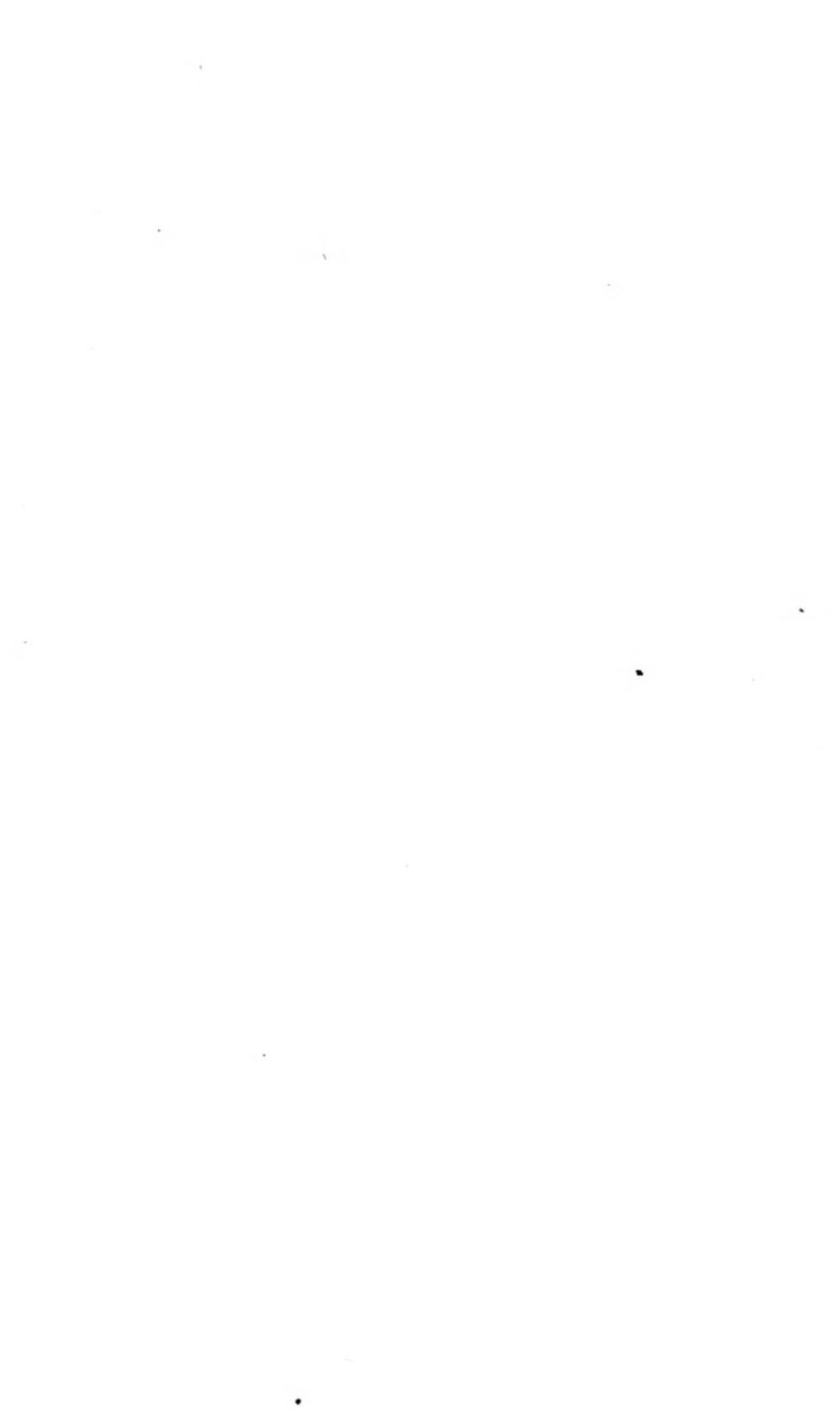
Decision Wise and Important.

From what has been said we see the wisdom, reasonableness and importance of decision in religion. If indecision is unwise, unreasonable, and dangerous, decision must be wise, reasonable, and important. Thus we know it to be. It is a saving of time, the right improvement of time, essential to enjoyment, a help to usefulness; it enables us to improve our privileges, to secure a heavenly inheritance, and to ripen for eternal glory. The undecided man is exposed to a thousand temptations, and he has little or no strength to resist them. The one who is decided shuns a multitude of temptations to which others are exposed; and when assailed by temptation, he has the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, with which to resist and conquer. He is strong in the Lord. He is prepared to meet with difficulties and discouragements, and overcome them. Luther had decision; and to his boldness and decision, under God, is the world indebted for the

glorious reformation. Had Luther been an Erasmus, popery might yet have held undisputed sway over Christendom. He kindled a fire which shall burn till the last trumpet shall awake the slumbering dead. Decision and boldness now may accomplish proportionate results. Let Christians be decided, especially the young; let them cling to the cross and follow Christ through evil and through good report—follow the Lamb whithersoever he leadeth them. Our passover is slain; let them keep the feast and regard all the great things of the law. Thus shall they resist temptation, thus overcome the world, thus glorify God and do good to men.

How Long?

And, my impenitent reader, let me ask you once again, How long halt you between two opinions? How long will you resist the Holy Ghost? How long refuse to listen to the reproofs of conscience and the convictions of your own judgment? This question must be decided! You will never come to Christ—never keep the paschal feast—never heed the great things of the law—unless you purpose in your heart, by the grace of God, so to do. Why not form that purpose now? That purpose is not religion; it is not a new heart, but it is a necessary step toward the kingdom of heaven. Let me beseech you to take that step now. Take it! Resolve! But rest not there. Yield your heart to the renewing and sanctifying Spirit. Flee to Christ! Go to Jesus, and embrace the cross.





Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01173 9960

